Archives for Learning & Education

A toolkit for accessible learning

Contents

Summary

Archives are for everyone, and are everyone's history. So inclusion should be on the agenda of every service and of everyone working in archives. We know that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can engage meaningfully with archives, and so we want to encourage more archive services to become more 'SEND-friendly'. Here's what colleagues, young people and partners say about their experiences:

"Working with Oastlers continues to be a hugely rewarding experience, and we are using our unique attributes as an archive and as an organisation to support the remarkable work of this school... As an Education Officer it's also been a real honour and inspiration to work alongside the Oastlers staff and pupils, serving as a reminder that the experiences we can share through our collections are truly unique and often quietly powerful."
Caroline Bunce, M&S Company Archive

"The experience has exceeded my expectations as it has been more exciting than I thought it would be."
Young person participant

"[the project] reinforced that we need to put our service users at the heart of everything we do – not the easiest for us, the easiest for them"
Tui, The Brain Charity (partner of the British Library)

Above all else, SEND-friendly archives need people who are confident in welcoming children and young people with SEND. One of the main barriers to inclusion is fear of the unknown and of saying or doing the wrong thing. Whilst engaging with children and young people with SEND might seem daunting it really isn't! This toolkit aims to equip you with information, ideas, tools and language to reduce this fear and to increase accessibility and inclusion of children and young people with SEND in archive services which are SEND-friendly.

The toolkit's introductory section includes more information about equality, diversity and inclusion as well as types of SEND. The main sections will help you to design and deliver accessible learning experiences. These sections are overlapping but are also designed to be read individually – so start where you need to Assess, Plan, Do, or Review. There are lots of ideas and tips from other archive services which have provided the case studies. There's also a section about ethics, safeguarding and legislation covering Ireland and the UK. If this is all new to you but you're keen to get going, you could read the case studies first.

Archive services which are already more SEND-friendly want you to know that you may already know more than you think you do - and that everyone can do something. We suggest that you aim for progress not perfection: good is good enough. Becoming more SEND-friendly is a journey not a destination and you don't have to do everything at once! We hope this toolkit helps you on your way.

Introduction

This toolkit can either be used as a step-by-step process to follow, or selected sections can be used to re-think how you can make your service or certain activities more accessible. It also contains case studies to showcase the benefits of working with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as practical information for you to tailor to your own setting, and pointers to other resources.

Learning is not just about skills and qualifications that help people get on in life. Learning also helps improve the lives and wellbeing of everyone who participates and helps us to build a better society. Learning should be a mixture of fun, challenge, and mental stimulus. Learning helps build and maintain social, physical, and mental skills. This is just as true for children and young people with SEND as for everyone else.

Aims
This toolkit aims to be a 'call to action' for the archives sector in the UK and Ireland and to inspire more services to work towards becoming "SEND-friendly". This means making archive services,

venues and programming content more accessible for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. It is aimed at individuals working or volunteering in archive services who can implement SEND-friendly changes in both policy and practice in their service.

A 'SEND-friendly' archive service is one where everyone shares responsibility for ensuring that people with special educational needs and disabilities feel understood, valued, and able to engage and participate.

The toolkit aims to:
• inspire more SEND-friendly practices and support and encourage archive services to be equitable and inclusive of children and young people with SEND
• support and encourage people working in archives to become more SEND-friendly
• offer practical guidance for making services and activities more SEND-friendly
• promote awareness and understanding of SEND.

It is important to recognise that there is a wide variety of archives services in the UK and Ireland and there is no 'one size fits all' approach – SEND-friendly will look different from service to service depending on sector (public, private or third sector) and legislative context. Services have wide-ranging and unique challenges including limited resources (for example, staffing or budgets), physical access and conservation constraints. Depending on context, some services may have statutory duties. Even if a service does not have all the tools to accommodate everyone's differing needs, working towards this is key.

The toolkit aims to inspire more SEND-friendly practices and offer support and encouragement. It would be unrealistic to expect that all the 'top tips' will be practical for every service to implement. You

are experts on your services and are encouraged to tailor this best practice to your context to define what SEND-friendly looks like for your service. It is important to remember that small changes can make a big difference to people with SEND. SEND-friendly archives is a developing field of work that we hope will change and improve over time. We acknowledge that this resource will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect feedback from the sector and provide new examples of best practice.

People first

Everyone is individual and has their own experience of the world. People's special educational needs and disabilities describe only a part of their identities. All people with SEND are three-dimensional individuals and the term SEND-friendly does not mean to reduce people's experience and identity.

When working with any other people remember "with us not to us". Ask people how they would like you to refer to them. Otherwise you could either use person-first language or identity-first language.

- **Person-first language** puts the person before a disabling or chronic condition (e.g. "people with Down/Down's Syndrome" rather than "Downs people").
- **Identity-first language** allows people to reclaim what others may see as a disability and incorporate it into their personal identity on their own terms (e.g. "autistic people" instead of "people with autism" and "Deaf people" instead of "people who are deaf").

Identity-first language is chosen by the person to refer to themselves.

Both person-first and identity-first language are good choices overall; it is appropriate to use either approach unless or until you know that someone prefers one approach over the other. Then use their preferred approach.

It is good practice to use this approach for other aspects of identity such as neurodiversity, gender identity or geographic heritage. Be careful not to reduce people to an acronym.

Bear in mind that you are engaging with people rather than with their disabilities, even though you might need to ask questions about these to meet people's needs. And remember that there are many 'invisible' disabilities, difficulties or impairments.

Core values

People working in archive services which are already more SEND-friendly suggest that being open, trustworthy, respectful, sensitive and person-focussed are important values and behaviours.

Scotland's "Getting it right for every child" approach aims to support children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential. The acronym SHANARRI provides a great reminder of the ways in which services can be delivered in any context, helping children to feel:

- safe
- healthy
- achieving
- nurtured
- active
- respected
- responsible
- included.

We hope that this toolkit helps you feel like this too.

What are SEND?

'Special educational needs' is a term used to describe learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for a child or young person to learn compared to others of the same age.

For our purposes these mean the same in terms of audience needs and inclusivity. We also want to address barriers to accessibility in this toolkit so we will use the term SEND throughout. SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability/Disabilities (or Disabled). Using an acronym for this term in this toolkit refers to the range of difficulties and conditions and not to the people who experience them.

This toolkit takes a broad definition of SEND and of children and young people as people up to the age of 25. A child or young person has SEN if:

- they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other people of the same age
- they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 provisions

A child or young person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Some people may have SEND because of a medical condition or disability, other people may have SEND without a diagnosis or disability.

Anyone may experience challenges with their learning at some point and people may overcome these difficulties with support. However,

children and young people with SEND are likely to need extra or different help to be able to learn.

Children and young people are not considered to have SEND just because their first or main language is different from the language primarily used in their educational setting. Some people do not use English, Welsh, Gaelic or Irish as their primary language (e.g.

d/Deaf users of ISL). Others may be expressively non-speaking in their communication but understand speech. Others may be able to communicate to some extent with an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) such as Makaton or Signalong. Other factors as well as language may combine with SEND to have an impact on children and young people. These may include their gender, ethnicity, national or geographic heritage, as well as things like socio-economic or accommodation status, and experience of care.

Of course, in an archives context children and young people with SEND may be part of a formal education group attending a schools session. But any visitors and users of archives may be people with SEND. So you should aim for all activities and services to be SEND-friendly.

This toolkit takes a broad approach. However legislation and education systems may narrowly define "SEND" or the equivalent terms. The terms might only be used 'officially' after a formal assessment leading to an agreed plan or statement of support, meaning a local or national educational authority has agreed to fund or provide particular kinds of support for a child or young person. Special Educational Needs or SEN is the legally recognised term used in England, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Additional Support Needs or ASN is used in Scotland, and Additional Learning Needs or ALN in Wales.

What types of difficulties are SEND?
They are different for every person who has difficulties. A learning **disability** is different from a learning **difficulty,** as a learning difficulty does not affect general intellect. But there are some things that are true for everyone with a learning disability, and there are some common (and not so common) conditions that will mean people with those conditions have a learning disability.

People may have difficulties or disabilities in one or more of the following areas.
- **Cognition and Learning** - A child or young person may have difficulties with specific activities like reading or spelling, or may find all learning difficult. They may have trouble understanding instructions and carrying out tasks, and may have memory difficulties.
- **Communication and Interaction** - A child or young person may have difficulty in talking to others or understanding what others are saying to them. A child or young person may have difficulty with interactions with others, such as not being able to take turns.
- **Physical and Sensory** – A child or young person may have hearing or vision impairment. A child or young person may have difficulty with sensory processing, being under or over-sensitive. A child or young person may have a medical condition which affects them physically.
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health** - A child or young person may have underlying conditions which affect their mental health. A child or young person may display behaviours such as having very low self-esteem or being very anxious. A child or young person may display behaviours which other people find challenging, disruptive or distressing.

Many children and young people with SEND attend 'mainstream' schools and colleges. Others may be home-schooled. Others may attend 'special educational provision' which is extra to or different from what is needed by other children or young people the same age. This covers many different things including communicating through sign language, having worksheets in a larger font and needing one-to-one or small group support. Some children and young people with SEND may attend hospital schools or education settings in secure units.

What are learning difficulties?

People with SEND related to cognition and learning often have a learning difficulty. These might be caused by a learning disability. These can be classified in the following ways.

- **Moderate Learning Difficulty or Disability (MLD)** - A child or young person with MLD may take longer to learn skills than the majority of their peers and are likely to require extra support in school.
- **Severe Learning Difficulty or Disability (SLD)** - A child or young person with SLD will have significant learning impairments which will impact their ability to learn without high levels of specialist support.
- **Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty or Disability (PMLD)** - A child or young person child with PMLD will have complex learning needs. In addition to severe learning difficulties they may have physical difficulties, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. A high level of specialist support will be needed at all times.
- **Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)** - Specific learning difficulties include Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia. A child with SpLD may require some support in school targeted to their specific area(s) of difficulty such as spelling or numeracy. These difficulties do not alone affect general intellect or reduce intellectual ability.

Some people with learning disabilities said:
"People will find it hard to learn things first time and they need time to understand things.
They might need carers support as well.
A learning disability is a lifelong condition.
Sometimes people are impatient.
We are awesome people that like to mix. People with a learning disability can do it!"
[from Mencap What is a Learning Disability?]

What is autism?

This toolkit relates both to autistic people and people with SEND because much of the advice can be useful for both groups of people and their family members or caregivers. Autism is a lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them. Autism is a spectrum condition which means autistic people may have very different needs from one another. We do not mean to imply that autism is in itself a learning disability.

Some autistic young people said:
"The autism spectrum is not linear from high to low but varies in every way that one person might vary from another.
Autism is a lifelong condition; autistic people are born autistic and autism can be identified at any point in a person's life. You can't see if someone is autistic just by looking at them and some people might not have been diagnosed as autistic when you meet them.
Many autistic people also have co-occurring conditions which can make their needs more complex. Autistic people may also have ADHD, anxiety disorders, depression, mental health issues, learning disabilities, physical health conditions and communication difficulties. Officially, autism is considered a disability, but some people do not identify in this way. Autism can be viewed as a disability or disabling due to the impact autism and co-occurring conditions can have on daily life."
[from Include Autism The toolkit for developing autism inclusive youth groups].

Equality, diversity and inclusion

One of the main barriers to inclusion is fear of the unknown and of saying or doing the wrong thing. This toolkit aims to equip you with information, ideas, tools and language to reduce this fear and to increase accessibility and inclusion of children and young people with SEND in archive services which are SEND-friendly.

Accessibility involves designing facilities, activities or services to optimise access. It's an idea often equated with accommodating people with disabilities: you might be familiar with the UK terminology of "making reasonable adjustments" in the workplace, for example. Being inclusive goes beyond accessibility. Inclusion is about embracing diversity, and ensuring involvement of everyone to the greatest extent possible giving equal access and opportunities to everyone wherever possible.

Social and attitudinal barriers were identified in a study by Kids in Museums about the participation hurdles for children and young people. Other studies by Ecclesiastical and Scope showed that the majority of parents of children and young people with SEND felt judged by other people when they go out or that staff or other visitors were unfriendly or made them feel uncomfortable during heritage visits. These attitudes can often be more upsetting than a building which is less physically accessible.

As well as being the right thing to do, inclusion is not optional for the archive sector; it is a legal responsibility. The right to access and enjoy cultural heritage is a human right which is supported by UNESCO and legislation. Article 27 of the United Nations (1948) Universal declaration of human rights states that 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.' So increasing access to archives must be taken seriously and be made an on-going priority.

People with disabilities have been identified as the world's largest minority group. Statistics vary but very roughly around one-fifth (20%) of all children and young people may have SEND at some stage. Around 2% have a 'plan' committing a local or national education authority to provide particular support. Arrangements for this vary between countries and the 'plan' is called different things e.g. Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), Statement of Special Education Needs.

It is generally accepted that around one in 100 people has autism (1% of the population). In 2016 the Irish National Council for Special Education on Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Schools estimated that 1 in 65 or 1.5% of the school going population in Ireland had a diagnosis of autism. According to the UK National Autistic Society around 700,000 people in the UK are on the autism spectrum: with their families, this means autism is a part of daily life for around 2.8 million people.

The 'social model' of disability suggests that the society or environment is disabling the individual rather than their impairment or difference. For example, not providing captions on videos will disadvantage anyone watching in a noisy environment, but lack of captions disadvantages Deaf people all the time.

Anti-discrimination legislation varies in different countries and there may be different aspects of different pieces of legislation which apply to your archive service. Most services and/or their parent organisations will also have their own policies on equality and access. The (2020) Code of Ethics for members of ARA UK and Ireland says that...

Members should ensure open and equitable access to records and archives as far as they can, compatible with respect for other

concerns such as the privacy of information subjects and their organisational context.

Accessibility and inclusion of children and young people with SEND are important in their own right. There are other benefits to becoming more SEND-friendly for children and young people:
- you will have fun and find the experience rewarding
- you will learn a lot and develop your own skills
- your archive service will become more friendly, accessible and inclusive for other people with additional or special needs, such as people with dementia
- you could reach new or wider audiences and develop new projects, initiatives and services with them
- you could explore your existing collections and also develop them to better reflect the experiences of people and communities that existed in the past and now
- you could help people to engage with people and communities who differ from them.

Why would children and young people with SEND want to participate in archives?
People working in SEND-friendly archive services commented that, whilst everyone is different, many children and young people with SEND enjoy and engage with:
- doing something different and having a new experience
- a personal sense of belonging and their own place in the 'historical timeline'
- feeling valued by others
- a different sense of the wider world and environment around them – 'sense of place'
- talking with professionals, engaging with old things and feeling trusted to do this
- 'soft' or workplace skills
- 'archiving themselves'.

Different people enjoy, value and learn from different things and there are different ways in which they want to engage. This toolkit aims to help you explore ideas and practical ways to offer these opportunities.

For educators and families, SEND-friendly archives can promote an increased awareness of archives and offer new opportunities. Engagement activities can give them significant benefits: for example, home educators don't need to plan learning content, and people can learn alongside their family members.

For other partners delivering joint projects, SEND-friendly archives can give new appreciation of relationships between objects and experiences. People from partner organisations commented on re-igniting their own practice, enjoying the engagement of participants, and valuing their own involvement and the impact of their organisation.

Some thoughts from children and young people with SEND, their educators, other partners, and archives about engaging together
"Local history can be a great way of exploring themes of everyday life. And it's a really interesting way of looking at the history of our community."
Participant in the Blueberry Academy/York Explore project
[What do you value about the project?]
"Heritage. Young people. Photos. Making film. Director."

[What have you enjoyed?]
"...it was the banter between all of us that came with this great journey."
"The experience has exceeded my expectations as it has been more exciting than I thought it would be. I did not know the scale of the project when I applied so to be involved with historic landmarks and professional equipment was very interesting."

People participating in the Whodunnits! project

"[the project] reinforced that we need to put our service users at the heart of everything we do – not the easiest for us, the easiest for them"
Tui – The Brain Charity, Seeing and Sound project *partner with the British Library*

"Working with Oastlers continues to be a hugely rewarding experience, and we are using our unique attributes as an archive and as an organisation to support the remarkable work of this school… As an Education Officer it's also been a real honour and inspiration to work alongside the Oastlers staff and pupils, serving as a reminder that the experiences we can share through our collections are truly unique and often quietly powerful."
Caroline Bunce, M&S Company Archive

Designing and delivering accessible learning experiences:
Assess – Plan – Do – Review

In England the SEND Code of Practice says that schools should use a 'graduated approach' to support a child with SEND. This graduated approach has four steps: Assess , Plan, Do, and Review. Then repeat!

This toolkit uses the same approach. You could use it to:

- learn from new approaches, activities and projects other archive services have tried
- adapt existing schools sessions to be more inclusive of children and young people with SEND
- develop educational and schools sessions specially designed for children and young people with SEND
- review other things offered by your service such as exhibitions, work placements and support for people to pursue their own interests
- start working with partners on SEND-friendly projects
- find other resources and sources of information and help.
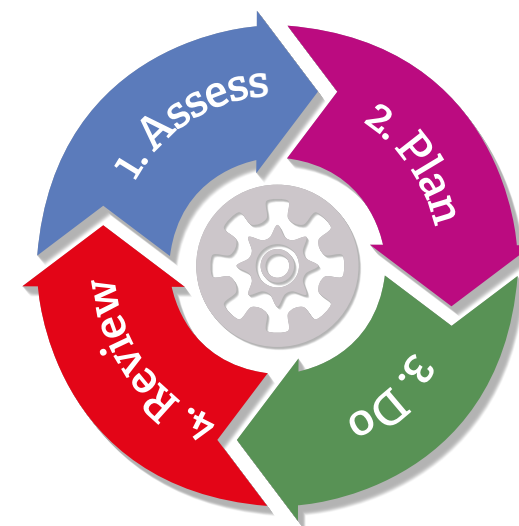
Much of this work is intuitive, practical and within the budget of even the smallest archive service. Archives which are more SEND-friendly will not only benefit children and young people with SEND and their supporting adults – it will make the archive service more accessible for other people with additional needs, such as visitors with dementia. People working in archives will also improve their skills and confidence in engaging creatively and holistically with all users.

The toolkit sections are overlapping but are also designed to be read individually – so start where you need to Assess, Plan, Do, or Review. If this is all new to you but you're keen to get going, we suggest you read the case studies first before assessing.

Assess
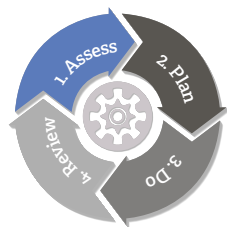
Taking stock is a good place to start! We suggest that you consider where you are now so that you can plan and prioritise later: there are some pointers below. Try to keep an open-mind and stay neutral whilst you do this: you might be tempted to rush ahead and start creating opportunities or solving problems straightaway, but take the time to think widely about where your service is.

You might want to share this process with a wider team, and also come back to it after a period of time.

We suggest that you pull your information together in a SWOT analysis SWOT analysis template section] for future planning. You are likely to have a list of further questions that you might need to research, or actions to follow up on. Take time to do this so that you have a good idea about your starting point and can plan your next step(s).

These are some things to think about: not everything will be relevant to your service. You will think of other issues too.

Top tips from other archive services
Assessing our starting point helped us identify:
- what is good for people with SEND is actually good for everyone. It's worth taking time to think things through
- allies within our organisations and other networks. These will help you find solutions
- local organisations which can help with provide advice and training e.g. with Makaton signs or communication symbols
- simple ways we could make content more accessible like short captioned video content on YouTube.

Things to think about

People
- What learning & engagement activities do you already offer for children and young people? What do they enjoy and engage with?
- Who currently uses your service remotely and in person? Who is missing? Do you have "target audiences"?
- What patterns of usage in person or remotely are there? Do you have times of year, week or day which are busier/quieter?
- Who works locally with children and young people with SEND? Are there special(ist) schools or supported housing for young adults?
  - Local authorities (councils or health) often provide information about the 'local offer' including Portage services.
  - Charities like Enable Ireland and the National Autistic Society (UK) often have lists of local groups and links to other organisations.
- What support and social groups are there for individuals, families or carers, or specialist workers?
- What about levels of enthusiasm, confidence, knowledge and skills among your people (staff and volunteers)?
- What experiences do your people have – including from their lives outside work (if they're willing to share these)? e.g. school governors.
- What roles and tasks are in your service and who does these? – Front of house? Conservation?
- Who else has skills, knowledge and contacts in your organisation? Do you have disability champions or specialists? How about existing partnerships?

Communications

- What access information about visiting do you provide on your website? Do you already
have an Access Statement? How about a visual guide/visual story? A sensory map?
- What information about your learning offer is on your website?
- Do you already have accessibility or Plain English or similar guidelines for writing accessible content?
- What communications channels do you use? How do you access these?

Collections

- How do you already use collections in learning and engagement?
- What do you have that is pictorial, sound, moving images as well as text? Think about how things were made, physical shapes, weight, textures or smells. Do you have objects?
- What are the stories in your collections, geographical or subject area that will resonate with people?
- What duplicates, handling or loan collections do you have?
- If you have exhibitions - is your interpretation accessible? e.g. written in Easy Read or large print alternatives for physical exhibitions. Do you suggest or provide any additional resources such as sensory materials?

Resources

- What is your existing learning offer? What are your existing activities and opportunities? Do you have any creative materials already?
- What equipment do you have to use or to lend?
- What might be available elsewhere in your organisation, including technology and software packages?
- What level of budget do you have?
- What time do you have?
- What contacts do you have for sign language interpreters

(British Sign Language, Irish Sign Language, Makaton, Signalong), palantypists, audio describers and other specialists?
- Could you bring in skills for a specialist accessibility audit of your provision, website or premises?

Places

- What digital tools and communication platforms do you have? Are you aware of and able to use their accessibility features like captioning? Are they accessible through common browsers (Chrome, Edge, Firefox)? Are apps specific to an operating system (Windows/Apple/Android)?
- What numbers can you safely and comfortably accommodate either digitally or in-person? – either way, groups from special schools might be smaller but have a higher ratio of adults to children than mainstream schools.
- If you feel your space is really limited or difficult to access (e.g. historic buildings) – could you go out or use another venue?
- What spaces are available to you, and how are they laid out?
- Where are your toilets and what type are they? Is there a Changing Places toilet on site or within walking distance? Are there disposal
containers for medical and personal needs, and easy washing facilities?
- If toilet provision is limited, could you provide a private space to change using a suitable floor mat or folding massage bed/change bed? e.g. in a First Aid room. This may be an acceptable option for some people.
- How could people arrive? – are there safe drop-off points adjacent to the building for minibuses/taxis? Is there Blue Badge or other parking and what are the arrangements for booking? If there is no on-site parking where are the nearest car parks and how much do they cost?
- What are your charges? Are there free or reduced-price tickets for carers or assistants? Do you have "family" tickets?

- How do people physically access your spaces and services within the building? Are there special routes? Wheelchair accessible lifts? What are your fire evacuation procedures, and are there particular assistance arrangements needed like using Evac Chairs or refuge points?
- Remember physical accessibility is not limited to wheelchair access – the overview of the symbols used by AccessAble will give you an idea of other areas of physical accessibility to think about if you or others do not have direct experience yourself.
- Are there any sensory challenges? These might be permanent or occasional. Some examples include
    - changes in floor levels, low/high ceilings, narrow/wide
    - noisy areas or sudden or unusual sounds (including hand dryers)
    - lighting changes bright/dark, lighting on motion sensors, or areas entirely lit by artificial light
    - particularly warm, cold or draughty areas or spots within rooms
    - smells coming into the area
- Where can food and drink be eaten? Can refreshments for a range of dietary requirements be bought nearby?
- Where could assistance animals be toileted or get a drink?

Don't be discouraged if your accommodation/building seems very difficult. Many buildings are. Often thinking about potential issues and providing information in advance helps people plan their visit to you. Sometimes there are simple fixes or pragmatic approaches to adjusting your facilities or the way you use them to make them more accessible. But remember that inclusion and accessibility are more than solely providing physical access to your service, important though this is.

Policies, procedures and plans
- How do people contact you and make bookings? Do you ask about accessibility needs or provide information about any alternatives where buildings are not currently inaccessible?
- How flexible are your booking policies? Can you accommodate time/date changes or cancellation? How much notice do you require?
- What are your service's/organisation's existing policies about access, equalities and safeguarding? When were they last reviewed?
- What safeguarding and legislation applies in your Nation and to the context you work in?
- What risk assessments are already in place for your service? When were they last reviewed?
- What are your service's strategic objectives and future plans (short-long term)?
- What are you aiming to achieve and in what timescales? e.g. adapting or extending your existing provision, piloting a new targeted intervention, planning a larger-scale project.

As we said above, using a SWOT framework can be helpful to prioritise, plan and carry out improvements to become more SEND-friendly. Don't worry if the list seems long at first – start with what you can directly do and influence. You don't have to do everything at once: aim for progress not perfection.

Case study highlight: National Museum of Scotland
The National Museum of Scotland accessed **training sessions** from The Yard, a charity who provide adventure play experiences for disabled children, young people and their families. The training included "Signalong" for the wider team as well as specialist training for the people working directly with schools. The Yard also advised on updating the Museum's resources and programme. The Museum also ran a consultation session with teachers. As a result they created a box of simple sensory resources like coloured acetates, fidget toys, ear-defenders and magnifying sheets. These can be used by visiting schools during workshops.

The Museum also changed its **booking processes** to discuss in advance the needs of people in school groups, resources which could be provided, as well as any triggers or other useful information. This means that Museum staff are able to adjust sessions, provide specialist resources (e.g. large-print copies), or book quiet spaces for breakout or lunch for schools to use.

Plan
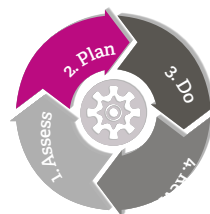
Assessing your service gets you well on the way to becoming more SEND-friendly. It also often gives you a long list of opportunities and challenges. So you will need to prioritise what you can do quickly and in the short-term, and what will take longer and need more resources. Remember you don't have to do everything at once!

It might be better to focus on making your existing provision more SEND-friendly rather than starting to work straightaway with new special schools on a major funded project. Remember that mainstream school groups will already include children and young people with SEND. People coming to family activities and informal learning events will also appreciate these being SEND-friendly. Not all difficulties and disabilities are visible.

Some initial aims might be:
- making existing family activities more flexible and inclusive for SEND children
- offering more SEND friendly signage and interpretation
- improving your website/other digital communications
- offering disability confidence training to your staff

The Do section covers content and delivery of individual sessions and activities and has some ideas for kinds of activities you could try. This section is about planning your approach to becoming more SEND-friendly and the process of making changes to what you do now. You could use it for developing audiences, improvement projects (e.g. website) or developing projects for funding.

Top tips from other archive services:
- Start small – you don't have to run a whole session from scratch the first time.
- If you're starting out, do some advance preparation with students, local networks and schools. What would people like you to offer, what would they like from the sessions?
- Giving people information so they can prepare is really helpful e.g. simple social/visual stories, visiting in advance. This costs very little to provide.
- Good is good enough – you don't have to be perfect!
- Talk to your local playcentre staff for ideas for sensory stuff or books to give options for children to engage.

It would be a good idea to create a simple action plan for anything that will take more time or effort so that you can stay on track.

You will be able to identify steps and solutions which are appropriate for your service in becoming more SEND-friendly. You might also find other people's experience helpful, and there are some suggestions below from other services. Not everything here will be relevant to the needs of your service.

Things to think about

People

In archives

SEND-friendly archives need people (staff/volunteers) who are confident in welcoming children and young people with SEND and are friendly and supportive. There are many excellent resources from specialist charities and others to learn from – we particularly like:
- Why is BSL important?
- An introduction to speech, language and communication
- A day at secondary school for the Girl With The Curly Hair
- What is a learning disability?
- We are…

- Triple Cripples: special treatment
- Left out of life: Saihan's story
- Think, ask, include me
- Supporting Emma
- Arumina's story

Ideally provide specialist awareness training as well as any specific skills like inclusive storytelling. Some charities offer free resources for this, and there are several providers working in the wider heritage sector. Even without a training budget you could learn some basic signs in British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL) and Makaton.
- Basic Greetings, Manners and Phrases in BSL
- Basic Phrases in ISL
- Basic Makaton signs
- Signalong resources

If you are beginning a project or a series of sessions then meeting people in advance in a setting they are comfortable in is very helpful. You could do this virtually. If this is difficult then consider providing photographs and some information about your team in advance or as part of your introduction to the session (e.g. hello my name is…. I work as a…. here. This means I look after collections/welcome people/ repair documents. My favourite colour/animal/food is….)

To find artists or other practitioners: you could contact art galleries or heritage sites in your area for recommendations. There are a number of organisations that have directories for specialists, artists, musicians and performers including engage and GEM. There are often directories of local interpreters and other communication specialists. Bear in mind if you are booking access workers that some of them, such as British Sign Language Interpreters, have rules about how long they can work before taking a break. So you will need to

book enough interpreters to cover the participants' requirements and to allow for comfort breaks and budget for these costs. If working with any freelancers we'd recommend following these best practice principles for commissioning and working with freelancers.

Networking with other people through ARA's Archives for Learning and Education Section, ARA's Diversity Allies and other bodies can be a great way to increase your knowledge, skills and experience.

Schools and educational settings

Schools are generally seen as a very effective way to engage with children and young people. However creating and sustaining relationships with schools has become a real challenge for the sector. Poor communication, timetabling demands, budget cuts, changing targets, a reduction in time available for visits and curriculum changes all have an impact on schools. Some specialist schools and settings may have more flexibility or discretion within their curriculum and might offer a wider or different range of enriching opportunities. The situation varies between schools and areas – unless you ask them directly, you won't find out.

In general remember that cost and transport are often the biggest practical hurdle for schools. Even if your offer is free, a school may have to pay for additional staff to cover offsite visits. Activities with a range of opportunities and cross-curricular links are more likely to be appealing. Careers information and developing workplace/employability and interpersonal skills could also be part of your offer. Think about whether you can visit them, and what you could offer digitally rather than only focussing on visits to your premises.

Schools can plan a long time ahead and may be thinking in the spring about the following academic year. This might affect your timescales.

SEND-friendly services working regularly with schools suggest starting with a local school, ideally within a short distance. Educational authorities (local or national) will list special schools, mainstream schools with specialist units and other provision. Invite appropriate school staff by name – their website will list staff and the areas they are responsible for. Offer an incentive like a free trial visit or a twilight session (around 4.30pm-6pm) with a tour, refreshments and a chance to handle original materials. If you want to develop a project then do budget for back-filling school staff for time spent working on the project as well as direct costs like transport.

Working directly with children and young people

You might run a takeover day, develop a regular group or be thinking about a specific project. If you want to reach children and young people with SEND directly then allow enough time for advertising and recruitment. Finding the right people to be involved in a project is important. If possible, start thinking about how to recruit young people at least three months before you want to engage with them - longer if possible.

You could identify and attend youth group sessions to build relationships with young people. If you're doing this bring an introductory taster workshop activity so they can understand what you are offering and become engaged.

Once you've found people to work with, respond to their availability – understand which days work better for the majority of participants and how much time they are able to commit.

SEND-friendly archives involve children and young people meaningfully in making decisions by interacting with them with the same respect as given to adults. Only children and young people themselves can communicate what works for them and what they like or dislike. Remember that communication is not just in words.

Community groups and partnerships

Often SEND-friendly archives work in partnership with others. As with all partnerships collaboration and co-production can become one-sided if you are too controlling and risk averse. This can leave partners disillusioned and unwilling to work with you again. Strategic partnerships need to be very carefully planned and put together to ensure an equal match throughout. Good external partnerships are based upon shared aims and objectives, regular and clear communication, and a good understanding of others' working methods.

At set up: discuss all partners' aims and objectives. Make realistic project plans and timeframes which all partners agree. Clearly define all partners' roles and responsibilities.

During a project: all partners should agree deadlines, take part in regular update meetings and reviews. Be flexible!

After the project: review how it went and make sure you agree credits and usage of any outputs. Don't forget to mark the conclusion of a project.

Collections

Think about accessible information for people viewing any existing exhibitions online or in-person. SEND-friendly archives provide accessible resources such as a visual exhibition guide containing images of key items with small amounts of text or Easyread captions. Journeys and related activities can create focus and structure. These kinds of supporting resources don't have to be about narrative and history, they could be themed on colour, materials or other things like clothing or animals. In a physical environment rest breaks could be included in trails. Accessible signage is also important for physical exhibitions. If you laminate physical resources for durability or hygiene reasons then use a matte finish to avoid glare.

Sensory boxes (or backpacks or satchels) and story sacks are becoming more common in museums and libraries. They were originally aimed at slowing down or keeping a child entertained, often with sensory or 'fiddle' toys, so that a family could extend their visit. In SEND-friendly services they now provide an accessible form of interpretation for children and young people and a support system for anyone. Loan boxes for use by teachers are a similar idea. They might contain objects and picture books themed to collections or exhibitions, as well as paper and things to make marks with, fidget spinners, weighted lap blankets, hand massagers, textile blocks, and colour filters. There are excellent examples from the Jewish Museum and The Hepworth, Wakefield. Many of these items are cheap and easy to clean or replace.

If you are planning audience development projects which will also develop your collections or "explore hidden histories" make sure that you work respectfully with your audience. People from groups which have been minoritised by numerical majorities in the past may not want to create an archive or deposit anything with your service. It is not their job to uncover or expose minoritised histories and experiences particularly if this is harmful, tokenistic or exploitative. This kind of work is important for archive services to do, but in appropriate ways. The ARA Diversity Allies are working to inform and support emerging practice in these areas.

Places

Whether working digitally or in-person, think about your environment and how to communicate most effectively within it – there are a lot of tips in delivering sessions.

If working digitally, SEND-friendly archives create digital environments that allow everyone to easily understand what is going on and participate in a way that works for them. Test your microphone and sound, and your environment in advance. Face your

camera directly while talking and try to keep still if you are not using a headset microphone: moving a lot can be visually distracting as well as disrupting your sound. Try to be in a well-lit environment so people have the option of reading your lips if needed. Eliminate glare and if possible, face a window or a source of natural light with no light sources behind you. Be aware of background noise and mute your microphone when not speaking, especially if you are in a noisy environment or may be interrupted. Be sure to explore all of the features of the software you are using and consider how you might use them to make the session as accessible as possible, like using live captioning, "raising hand" and reactions, and chat functions. Tell participants about these. Make time for a stretch and screen break at least every 50 minutes.

When working in physical spaces it can be helpful to think in the short term about temporary adaptations for particular activities or sessions. You might be able to borrow equipment like portable hearing induction loops, cushions or mats to accommodate people who prefer to sit on the floor, or pop-up tents to provide quiet/low sensory spaces; many of these things are available at low-cost.

You can produce your own large print or Easyread text documents and signs. The use of symbols is useful for signs giving instructions like touch or don't touch, as well as facilities such as food, shop, or toilet. There are proprietary, licensed systems available like PECs or Widgit which are widely used - but you could use simple clip art and photographs.

Providing simple things like ear defenders, magnifying sheets or coloured acetates can increase accessibility or help minimise sensory overload. Remember to clean these regularly.

If planning work in your building, think about prioritising alterations to spaces and additions to furniture. You might have identified difficult areas in your assessment. Many organisations are currently replacing neon or fluorescent lights – this can reduce sensory overload as well as helping the environment, which might add to the business case for a project. Furniture like adjustable height tables, different kinds of seating and changing tables could be purchased gradually.

You could have an accessibility audit carried out by a specialist organisation – these will often improve your written communications including online. They could produce an access guide as in this example for the Library of Northern Regional College in Magherafelt, Northern Ireland.

Policies, procedures and plans
SEND-friendly archives have safeguarding procedures in place: the NSPCC website has a very useful step-by-step guide and templates which can be used by any organisation. Your assessment will show whether you need to put some immediate procedures in place or review your policies.

If you want to take photographs or use people's work think about how you will obtain, record and manage their permission. You may have existing procedures or need to think about a simple solution like saving notes or copies of consent forms alongside image or audio files.

Customer journey maps can be helpful to see how people get access to services and facilities and what barriers might get in their way. Then remove or minimise these barriers and rethink the map to see how things have changed. Consider taking up the Sunflower Lanyard scheme where people with additional needs (particularly invisible disabilities) can self-identify, helping staff to know they may require extra support.

Communications and website

Your website is key. If you have limited control over this think about other ways you can provide information, for example downloadable pdfs linked from your pages.

There are two main aspects to accessibility by people with motor, visual, auditory or cognitive difficulties: design and content. Most of the key principles of **accessible design** can be implemented without compromising the overall look and feel of a website or online resource. The international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) include a useful checklist which is also available as a pdf. The University of Washington has its own shorter version of this checklist. The WCAG 2.1 guidelines are good practice for any organisation to work towards, and some public sector organisations in the UK may be required to meet them. We'd suggest that you review your website and social media against the checklists and plan to make any changes as well as how you can incorporate good practice in the future.

Clear information or content about your service is equally important as design. Provide information about:
- your learning opportunities, which are targeted to different audiences such as teachers or families.
- using and visiting your service. Use the questions in Assess – Places above to help you provide all the information people need if they are visiting your premises.
  Ideally present this with pictures in a visual story or social story so they know what to expect. There's a good example from the National Museum Cardiff.
  Make sure these are kept up to date as the Ulster Museum has done.
  You could also create a separate sensory map to highlight any sensory triggers as well as the location of facilities like toilets and seating. Here's an example from the Royal Academy.

- your collections, with highlights, learning journeys or curated "ways in".

In general: try to write using short sentences and an active voice. Aim for a 9-year-old reading age in any general written materials - you can use readability statistics in MS Word as well as numerous online readability checkers. There is some useful information from AbilityNet and from the UK Government digital service on writing for the web which applies to any context.

Case studies highlight: Britten Pears Arts; M&S Company Archive
Britten Pears Arts **prepared** in **advance** over a period of time as they built a relationship with the schools involved in their project. The team offered a pre-visit to the site to teachers, and the Collections and Learning Curator also visited the school and met the children before they visited the Red House site. Providing the schools with a visual story before they visited helped the schools introduce the children to the site: positive feedback suggested that children already knew what to expect from the day. It was helpful for the teachers and the children to plan, as well as for the Britten Pears Arts team who planned each session around a similar basic set of elements but tailored to the needs of the different groups.

Advance communication with the school before the workshops was also crucial at the M&S Company Archive. The teacher explained that the young people would need to move around, use different learning styles throughout and feel able to ask questions and contribute their own views. So the Learning Officer planned and adapted an existing workshop, including changing the order of activities, adapting the content to suit smaller numbers, and adding a break. They were aware that each workshop would be different and that they would need to be very flexible and adaptable when they delivered the sessions.

Do
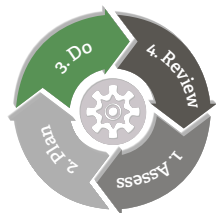
This section contains ideas and information for delivering activities or sessions. You will find the planning section helpful particularly for projects, as well as assessing [internal link to assess section] where your service is. Don't forget to review [internal link to review section] how things go and to adapt what you do as you go along. Becoming more SEND-friendly is a journey, not a destination.

When delivering remember you are the expert in your collections but your openness and enthusiasm are even more important. Children and young people with SEND are the experts in their likes and interests. And teachers, carers and families know them best. In general try to keep activities loose and open-ended, rather than target or results driven. The process is valuable and the whole of the experience is valid. Think about experiential learning using the forms, textures and colours of physical materials, as well as sounds, sights and smells. SEND-friendly archives say a sense of form and of place is just as valid as understanding history and reading text. Provide variety in activities, pace, and levels and types of participation.

Top tips from other archive services
- A modular approach works well: different activities will suit different individuals, give everyone an opportunity to try what works for them.
- Have a go! Be flexible and willing to change in the moment/to deviate from plans. Perfect is the enemy of good!
- Your confidence and enthusiasm for the materials will show.
- Think about visual sources, especially photos.
- Conservation is always popular!
- Treasure or mystery boxes are intriguing.
- Use transcriptions, alphabets, and read things out loud if using text.

- Rather than expecting people to read text, think about how it is made: "forget all you know about reading and writing" can be empowering for children and young people who find these difficult. You can use different techniques for mark-making and practising letters like sand trays.
- Think about how documents were created rather than their content. You can use their physical nature or how people in the past made a mark.
- Focus on people and roles with archives and behind the scenes tours. You can offer digital versions of these if you have accessibility issues with your building.

You may find it easiest to adapt your existing activities at first rather than trying to create something completely new. There are four different ways you can do this:

Open – Leave the activity as it is but offer a clear structure to the activity and any goal you are aiming for. Outcomes might include engaging with someone new, expressing a choice or taking turns instead of knowledge or fact-based learning objectives.

Modified – Modify the activity or skill slightly by breaking it down and adapting it for a specific young person or to meet the needs of those in the group. Give them extra time to complete it if necessary.

Parallel – Run differing activities at parallel times. This allows choice and flexibility in the activities people participate in. You could make activities focus on different skills.

Separate – for those with additional needs or higher support needs a completely separate and modified activity might be required as a less structured or high energy activity might be unsuitable. Children and young people with SEND may require one to one support in an activity and a focus on individualised activities and skill building.

Your planning will help you think about this.

Delivering sessions

There are some practical things you can do to run inclusive activities.

When working with a group:
- identify yourself and smile (!). Introducing yourself with some information is good, particularly if you haven't been able to meet people or send introductions in advance, e.g. hello my name is…. I work as a…. At the archives I do…. My favourite colour/animal/food is……
- be positive and upbeat
- enjoy yourself: don't worry about the mess or feel embarrassed about looking stupid
- speak clearly, more slowly than you might do usually – and not too much! Make sure that you are facing forward and are clearly lit for anyone who needs to see you to lip read
- keep it simple, short and flexible – don't talk too much or try to cover too much, and have alternative(s) available
- accept don't correct – value and encourage all contributions. If you ask a question, wait and listen to the answer(s)
- engage all the senses and provide different ways to interact.

During the activity communicate clearly as needed. Speak slowly and clearly and identify yourself.

You will need to think about including children and young people who communicate with few or no words. Some people may use a tablet or other communication aid to speak. Others may write things down or use different languages to you like BSL, ISL or Makaton. When supporting people to communicate try to:
- recognise and value their communication strategies. Don't make assumptions based on how people use the language you are most familiar with. They may understand more than they speak
- engage specialist support when necessary and if you are able to, but don't talk to the assistant or support worker rather than to the young person

- create and use visual materials to support understanding
- use concrete, literal and precise language. If you use metaphors or idioms then explain them. Use consistent language e.g. "documents", "photographs", "collections" or "services" rather than "archives"
- say a person's name before you give any individual directions or instructions
- allow people time to process what you have said – they might need to work out what you said and the meaning. Don't assume that they have or haven't understood
- body language and facial expression can be useful but don't rely on these to communicate.

For some autistic children and young people, the fear of doing an activity 'wrong' or 'failing' can stop them from taking part. They may like to know what is happening and when things are going to happen in order to reduce uncertainty. Telling people about the rules and what the activities are lets them know what they can do during a session and what is expected of them. Give advance information about what you will be doing, particularly if anybody will be doing something unexpected or unfamiliar like dressing up. Make any alternative or parallel activities clear to give people 'permission' to do these if needed. You could use a visual timetable as well as giving information verbally.

When communicating with people individually I Can suggest
1 Reduce background noise.
Choose a quiet place so you can both concentrate on the conversation.

2 Face the person you are talking to and make eye contact.
However, remember not everyone will be happy, or able, to look you in the eye. Those with autism may find this particularly difficult, and people using a communication aid or book/board will have to look at what they are doing.

3 Tell them if it is the first time you have met and talked to a person who uses an alternative method of communication.
This will give the other person the opportunity to show you the best way to communicate with each other.

4 Ask them what helps.
Ask them to show you how they use their AAC system to help you understand what, if anything, you need to do to make communication successful.

5 Establish how they communicate 'yes' and 'no'.
This may not always be the obvious nod and shake of the head.

6 When you ask a question wait for a reply.
This sounds obvious but for some people it may take them longer to reply than you may usually wait for an answer.

7 Be patient.
Sometimes it can be tempting to finish off a person's sentence for them and some welcome this as a way of speeding up communication. However, others may find this annoying so always ask if the other person is happy for you to do this.

8 Always be honest about how much of the conversation you have understood. This will give the other person opportunity to explain points that have not been understood, or ask for support.

Kinds of activities
These ideas are to get you started if needed and are by no means a comprehensive list! You will have your own ideas – be inspired by your collections! Keep the needs of the children and young people with SEND in mind.

If you are stuck, think about familiar and universal topics like clothing, food and drink, doing things, or familiar buildings. Photographs and pictorial content like newspaper adverts can be really useful. What about selecting items based on colour, materials or shapes rather than their content?

People and places
Meet the team and tours give children and young people with SEND a chance to experience things that people working in archives take for granted.

For longer timescales, takeover day and young curators activities can be very fulfilling, as can work experience. SEND-friendly archives suggest real tasks like making historical-style festival decorations and decorating the building, hands on preservation work, selecting an item for display or social media, or an accessibility audit from their own perspective have all been popular with children and young people with SEND. Wearing ID badges and any proper/official clothing needed, and being welcomed as real staff members can help them feel valued.

Sensory storytelling
Base the story on a great item/object or story. Know who the audience will be and think of ways to involve them. For any audience, keep it short and flexible, broken down into short pieces. Use sound or music, props for texture and colour. Could you incorporate role play? Include gesture, rhythm, rhyme and repetition, a few Makaton signs and lots of audience participation.

If storytelling in physical spaces choose an appropriate space and set it up with a range of seating, and space for wheelchairs near the front. Can you go on a trail to the storytelling area which could be incorporated into the activity? Have multiple copies of things to hand around! Could you use smell pots?

Collections-based activities

Think about form as well as content: colours, shapes, textures, patterns…

For in person activities, aim for as much handling as possible as well as having alternative versions (enlarged, transcribed, coloured paper) available for individual use. Use a matte finish for laminated materials to reduce glare. If displaying original material, make sure they are on plain surfaces to reduce visual noise.

The journey of a postcard from the Northern Ireland Community Museum takes inspiration from a postcard for a wide variety of related activities.

What makes a house a home from The National Archives/Wandsworth Heritage Service uses architectural drawings, advertisements, designs and photographs.

Visual arts and crafts

Art and craft activities can give choice and be immediate. Animation and photography as well as mark making, drawing, clay and numerous other activities.

Make art and craft activities open ended, allowing for any level of participation. The 'end result' rule is that taking part in the activity is the important part rather than what the end result looks like. For example, instead of saying "we are making clay animals we saw in the photograph" suggest "we are playing with clay, and you can make

something you saw today if you like". This reduces 'judgement' and 'failure' at the start.

Explore how written documents were produced through mark-making using brushes, quills, sponges, toy cars or other materials like shaving foam, sand, paint…

Artistic and creative activities can allow children and young people to express themselves non-verbally. Design, music, film and craft can encourage critical thinking and reflection.

The Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester encouraged people in their homes to use ordinary or very cheap materials and objects for art if you need inspiration!

Expressive and performing arts

These could involve or follow on from storytelling. You could take inspiration from pictures or video of people doing things or audio of sound. You could create sound and movement related to these, or visual arts using movements.

You could use one-line stories where each person adds a line or an action. Start with 'once there was a child called…' and then move to the next person and ask them to continue the story by adding one line, miming an action or drawing an event. It can be much easier to engage in this way than asking for an individually produced script. Whoosh storytelling is another good approach.

Some museums and cultural bodies have found that children and young people with SEND may have fewer opportunities or limited choices for engaging in performing arts, game design or audio/video production. So activities or projects involving these things may be enthusiastically received by some people. You could explore archive material and respond through performance, dance, script writing

and film. Children and young people who prefer not to act could make props or scenery, audio describe, film, take photographs…

Case study highlights

The British Library used its sound archives for creative projects including making a giant sensory marble run, making sounds, and exploring journeys.

Britten Pears Arts used written and visual materials from the archives, encouraged handling, and took visitors to the strongroom as part of a wider visit to the site.

Explore York used historic photographs of the building where their partner organisation is now based to create digital stories.

M&S Company Archive used recipes and advertising to create products, (edible!) food, print advertising and films.

The National Museum of Scotland provides transcriptions, high quality images and simple handouts for archival sources.

Review
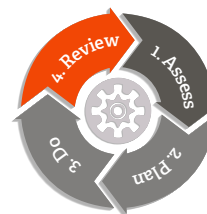
SEND-friendly archives review their assessment, plans and doing regularly. You could do this immediately after delivering a session, during a longer project as formative evaluation, or as part of your strategic planning. Make sure you allow enough time to do this and that you are able to feed back what you learn into your ongoing work.

Consider promoting what you are doing or have done so that other archive services understand the importance of being SEND-friendly. This is a journey that the sector is going on as a whole: we will need good practice examples for the next version of this toolkit!

If you are working with partners they may have their own established evaluation methods. You could tailor these to look at any impact your activities have on participants and on the outcomes.

Many services use the Inspiring Learning for All (ILFA) framework which provides a common language and measures to describe the impact of archives' activity on learning by individuals. There is a useful online evaluation toolkit to help you use the framework if it is new to you. You could think about indicators like:

- enjoyment, inspiration & creativity: being inspired
- attitudes & values: having opinions about ourselves e.g. self-esteem
- skills: Social skills – meeting people, sharing, team working, remembering names, introducing others, showing an interest in the concerns of others
- skills: knowing how to do something: key skills - numeracy, literacy, use of ICT, learning how to learn
- action, behaviour, progression: being engaged, trying new things, returning or continuing
- attitudes and values: opinions or attitudes towards other people.

You will need to choose indicators which are relevant to you and the people you are working with.

You might also want to consider individual wellbeing using the NEF wellbeing outcomes framework. This was developed in 2011 as a means of capturing evidence of change and development to an individual's wellbeing over time and is commonly used in the heritage and cultural sectors. You could use this in conjunction with the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale which is also used. You could think about indicators like:
- self esteem: feeling good about yourself
- resilience & optimism: feeling optimistic about the future
- resilience & optimism: feeling you are dealing with problems well
- autonomy & competence: feeling you can make up your own mind
- autonomy & competence: feeling you are thinking clearly
- relatedness: feeling you are relaxed
- relatedness: feeling you are close to people
- relatedness: feeling you belong to community.

You will need to choose indicators which are relevant to your activities and the children and young people you are working with.

For bigger projects you might also want to consider communal social change. You could use the Generic Social Outcomes developed for the ILFA framework in 2006 for this.

Evaluating the impact of activities with children and young people with SEND could seem difficult. Conventional self-assessment questionnaires might not be appropriate or provide nuance, although you might want to use these with any supporting adults. Some ideas that have worked well for other services include asking children and young people simple questions (verbally or using written forms including symbols) before and after activities to gauge their levels of wellbeing or knowledge: How are you feeling today? What do you know about (topic)? You could also use digital reactions, digital polls or voting tokens, scales using happy/neutral/sad faces, "voting with your feet" or other appropriate methods.

Artistic and creative activities can allow participants to focus on reflection instead of group discussions or evaluation questionnaires which might be overwhelming for some. Design, music, film and craft encourage critical thinking and provide the opportunity for participants to express themselves non-verbally.

You could observe participants in sessions, noting their reactions and responses to activities. Make any notes directly after sessions as doing this during the session may make participants uncomfortable. You could think about enjoyment, increased confidence, learning new skills (and their opposites). You may hear children and young people express these verbally or you may see behaviour which indicates these feelings.

Observing needs you to avoid your preconceptions influencing what you have observed. For example, you may think a child does not communicate very often, but if you keep an open mind you may find that although they are often quiet they are using body language that is being ignored, or that they communicate well with peers but not with adults, or that certain activities or interactions seem to make communication easier or harder for them. Your observations will also help you recognise an individual's needs more clearly. Emotional well-being has a very strong influence on us all, including our ability to learn, to communicate, our behaviour, curiosity and ability to cope with new experiences.

If appropriate you could use individual interviews to create participant case studies. You could also consult with activity leaders, other practitioners and family carers or other supporters. You should not entirely base your reviews on what other people say about children and young people but should include their own voices as

much as possible. Remember the principle of "with us not about us". Involving children and young people at different milestones throughout a longer project provides more genuine engagement with review and ensures their input is directly felt across your activities. Events are an excellent way to do this. Ensure the contribution of children and young people is both recognised and celebrated in a way that they feel comfortable with. Of course it's essential to consider the needs, interests, opinions and access requirements of your young people and plan the event to suit. This is particularly important if you are planning a celebratory or showcase event with people not directly involved in a project (e.g. funders or higher-level decision makers). Do the children and young people feel confident in front of this kind of audience? Would they prefer (not) to be present when their work is shown?

Remember that your review of a project or activity might be text based but also use images, audio and video if appropriate. You can create a visual record of events, using visual minutes. You must ensure you have permission to include images of identifiable people and treat people fairly and you must credit other people for their work.

SEND-friendly archives use their ongoing reviews to assess where they are now, shape their plans – and do more SEND-friendly things in future.

Case study highlights: British Library; Explore York
The British Library also **reviews the experiences of participants**, support workers, teachers and staff during projects to adapt what they do in different sessions and to contribute ideas and resources for other projects. One project was designed to be collaborative with families developing ideas alongside the artists which they were able to pursue during the project. At the end the young people 'archived' their work with the Library. A subsequent project with a different group of people built on some of these activities, as well as adapting or developing new ones that suited the participants more. Outside specific targeted projects, but building on the lessons learned, the Library has developed a series of multi-sensory videos which can be used by other organisations or in the Library's own online sessions to help other people explore and create within their own settings.

At Explore York **responding to people's interests** meant that the three related sessions were shaped by the young people. The first session was fairly well planned out ahead of time, but the second and third sessions were built around the young people's ideas. They created a list of things they wanted to find out for the following week which the archivist researched for the next session. During the sessions one of the young people new to Blueberry Academy showed an interest and aptitude for history and learning facts, which led the Blueberry to support them to find a volunteer position in a museum afterwards. The results of a one-off project led the partners to consider and develop new experiences for Blueberry's young people. The archivist involved also used what they learned to work in different ways afterwards.

Related issues

Ethics

SEND-friendly archives should follow ethical professional practice in relation to children and young people with SEND and learning. This is based on principles of:

- care, or relating positively to others
- justice, or sharing and collaborating fairly
- critique, questioning policies and practices in order to improve them.

Always remember that first and foremost you are dealing with people, and not with difficulties, conditions or impairments.

You should have an appropriate safeguarding policy and procedures in place before working with children and young people with SEND.

When creating something involving children and young people with SEND you should consult with them and ask for their consent to use their stories, ideas or images instead of using these in your own way. You should ensure they have a full understanding of how anything which is created might be used and gain their consent for this. Support workers, teachers, parents and guardians might need to be involved.

Take care in how you present such projects and activities to others. Avoid shifting the focus to yourself or your service and where appropriate use the participants own responses, comments and feedback. Ensure you never exploit people in order to benefit an organisation or project.

Some disability groups want you to know that if you are recreating activities that were practised in the past be careful not to recreate those which wouldn't be acceptable or ethical today. For example, some craft activities (e.g. basket weaving or embroidery) used historically by institutions working with disabled people are now considered to be inappropriate ways to 'keep people busy'. It is important that you do not mis-represent the past and that the complexities of issues associated with this work are explored. It would not be possible for children and young people to learn the really intricate skills required for these activities in just a few basic workshops and it would be inaccurate to re-enforce the stereotype that this activity was low skilled and recreational.

You should understand your own experiences of SEND as well as considering ARA's code of ethics and your organisational policies. You must follow legislation in your organisational context. Do remember that your organisation's policies, procedures and established norms may need to change.

Safeguarding, child protection and the protection of vulnerable adults

This toolkit uses the general concept of "safeguarding" which the NSPCC (UK) defines as "action taken to promote the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and prevent them from coming to harm". Legislation relating to safeguarding, child protection or the protection of vulnerable people varies between Ireland and the nations of the UK and different language is used for these concepts.

Depending on your organisational context there may be specific duties in relation to safeguarding. For example, ensuring that your organisation safeguards the welfare of any children and young people that it works with is part of the responsibilities of Trustees of Registered Charities which are defined by the Charity Commission in England and Wales; the Scottish Charity Regulator has similar requirements.

A SEND-friendly archive service should have an up-to-date and robust safeguarding policy in place outlining your service's (or parent organisation's) approach to safeguarding. It should include processes to protect the welfare of children and vulnerable adults while you are working with them and what you would do if you needed to report concerns about someone's welfare. It is good practice to have a safeguarding policy even if you are solely working with formal education groups through schools and are 'covered' by their policy and procedures. There is guidance about how to write a policy and a template policy on the NSPCC website along with many supporting resources. In Ireland TUSLA the Children and Family Agency website includes some information for organisations and guidance on Child Safeguarding Statements.

In both Ireland and the UK, if your archive service works regularly with children, young people or vulnerable adults, it is best practice for there to be a safeguarding lead within your organisation and for

them to be identified in the policy. Their role is to ensure that all safeguarding concerns are handled effectively. Depending on your organisation this might be a statutory duty. If you are part of a large or complex organisation this lead may be based elsewhere in the organisation, or they could be within the archive service itself if this is appropriate. The role might be called a:

- Child protection officer
- Child protection lead
- Designated Liaison Person
- Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- First point of contact for Child Safeguarding Statement
- "Named person" for child protection
- Safeguarding or child protection coordinator.

This toolkit refers to a 'safeguarding lead' to encompass all these titles and roles.

If you do not already have a safeguarding lead, the NSPCC provide a sample role description which can be tailored to any organisation. The safeguarding lead should have appropriate training.

If your staff are working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults occasionally, it's important they understand:

- your code of conduct for safeguarding of these people
- what this means in practice for the work they do, for example practical arrangements for a session
- how to spot different areas of concern
- the process for reporting safeguarding concerns.

This kind of briefing could be carried out by your safeguarding lead. If staff are regularly working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults then they may require more extensive training in safeguarding.'

Depending on your organisational circumstances and the kinds of activities you may be doing, you may need to carry out disclosure or criminal records checks. This might be called:

- basic disclosure (through Disclosure Scotland),
- a disclosure and barring service (DBS) check (through the Disclosure and Barring Service for England, Northern Ireland and Wales)
- Garda Vetting (through An Garda Siochána National Vetting Bureau in Ireland).

Who can have a particular kind of disclosure or check and what kind of check they have may be regulated in law and is determined by the frequency and nature of their contact with children and young people or vulnerable adults. More information about this is provided on the relevant websites.

Legislation

The legal frameworks surrounding working with children and young people with SEND depend on your national context and what kind of organisation your archive service is. This toolkit can only offer general guidance and you should gain advice tailored to your situation if you need it.

You should first understand the responsibilities and any statutory duties your archive service has under equalities legislation. If your archive service or parent organisation has equality policies you should start with these. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. (England, Scotland and Wales) all provide guidance and resources to help you identify the what applies to your archives service.

In general, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 includes a statutory duty for public bodies in **Ireland** to "eliminate

discrimination, promote equality, and protect human rights of staff and service users". The Equality Act 2010 applies to all organisations in **England, Scotland** and **Wales** which provide people with goods, facilities or services; they must follow equality law in relation to staff behaviour, places where services are delivered, and other mechanisms through which services are provided including internet services, websites and telephone access, written information, advertisements and marketing. In **Northern Ireland** there are several pieces of separate legislation covering several equality areas underpinned by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; a helpful summary is given by the NASUWT.

As part of the Equality Act 2010 or Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (in Northern Ireland) public sector organisations in the **UK** have legal requirements for accessible websites. If this applies to your service you should already be aware of this and have plans in place to meet these requirements. If you are unsure about these you should check with whoever is responsible for your website.

You should also be aware of your legal responsibilities around safeguarding. In **Ireland** safeguarding processes (defined in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 and 2014) apply to:

- children - anyone up to the age of 18
- "vulnerable people" who are defined as people suffering from a disorder of the mind, having an intellectual disability, suffering from a physical impairment, or having a physical disability. In the definition if these issues restrict their capacity to guard themselves against harm by another person or result in them requiring assistance with the activities of daily living, then safeguarding processes apply.

In the **UK** the people to whom safeguarding processes apply are:
- "children" - anyone up to the age of 18 (defined in the Children Act 1989, the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Children and

Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, or the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014)
- vulnerable adults or adults at risk (defined in the Care Act 2014), including any person 18 years and over who has needs for care and support and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect and; because of those care needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

You should also be aware of the GDPR and relevant national legislation and how it applies to the activities you are running. This might include bookings and practical arrangements, reporting and evaluation, photography or other permissions as well the content of archival material used in your activities. Copyright or other intellectual property rights may also apply too of course.

Depending on your plans and activities, it may be helpful to have a general awareness of the arrangements and entitlements for children and young people with SEND in your country's education system. Each country has different periods for compulsory schooling and provision of support which has been agreed for funding by a local or national authority. Separate or additional provisions relating to disabilities may also apply and the arrangements for age also vary.

The following table presents a very simplified overview which may be helpful. The linked documents summarise the statutory support which is often provided through schools, as well as other information. Don't forget that some children and young people with SEND may be home educated, educated in a setting that is not a school, in hospital, in youth custody, and with parents in the armed forces. Arrangements and entitlements for them may vary.

Country	Compulsory education to age	Local/national funding for SEN support in legislation (usually if certain requirements are met and a formal plan in place)	Further general information about the education system and arrangements for children and young people with SEND
England	18 (to 16 in school, then full-time school or college OR apprenticeship/training OR a combination of these)	Up to age 25	Guide for parents and carers
Ireland	16 OR completion of 3 years 2nd level education	Up to age 18 (relevant legislation may not be fully implemented)	Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs
Northern Ireland	16	Up to age 19	Information for parents, carers and schools
Scotland	16	16-18	Additional support for learning
Wales	16	Up to age 19	Information for parents and carers

The national Citizens Advice Bureaus (UK) or Citizens Information (Ireland) also provide helpful overview information. Some local authorities, particularly councils or health services, also provide good summaries of sources of information and support available locally.

Links to other areas of work

Becoming more SEND-friendly is likely to require links with other areas of work in your service so that this is joined-up and effective. You will need to coordinate your efforts and activities and may need to work closely with other people.

You might need to think about:
- marketing and communications, including website content and design
- collections management, including conservation/preservation, cataloguing and collections development
- outreach, engagement, audience development
- visitor/user experience, front of house
- improvement frameworks like Customer Service Excellence, Archive Service Accreditation, or similar.

Sometimes you might need to make a business case or formal proposal for change. If so, remember that advocacy is a(n often long) process involving a range of activities and messaging, backed up by appropriate examples and data such as costs. If you have a specific opportunity to make a presentation or recommendation report you should support this with other kinds of communications. We hope that this toolkit might provide some of what you need – but make sure you tailor content appropriately to your circumstances!

If you have an opportunity to engage with strategic decision makers you should think very clearly about what you want to achieve through the advocacy opportunity. Are you seeking change in your:
- enabling environment – broad understanding? Policy or procedure change?
- infrastructure – input from other teams? Integration with other procedures?
- offer – change to existing services or systems? New systems or services?
- resources – input from other staff/teams? One-off small investment? Initial grant or project funding? Sustainable/targeted core funding? Greater skills and/or capacity in workforce?

Understanding clearly what you are asking for and what people might perceive as the barriers will help you make a persuasive case. Good luck!

Glossary of terms used in this toolkit

British Sign Language/BSL
This is the first language of many d/Deaf or hard of hearing children and young people in the UK. It is an official language in Scotland. Both Scotland and Wales use BSL; there are a few unique national signs but generally BSL is used throughout the UK. Irish Sign Language may be used by Irish speakers.

Changing Places toilets
These are larger than standard disabled facilities and include a change bed and hoist. This is because the standard baby change table/bed is unlikely to be suitable for anyone over the age of about 3 years.

Irish Sign Language/ISL
This is the first language of many d/Deaf or hard of hearing children and young people in Ireland. British Sign Language (BSL) may also be used in Ireland.

Makaton
A language using speech with signs (gestures) and symbols (pictures) to help people communicate. Over 100,000 children and adults use Makaton symbols and signs, either as their main method of communication or as a way to support speech.

Palantypist
A specialist speech-to-text typist.

PECS.
A proprietary, licensed system of pictorial communication symbols.

Portage services
A home visiting educational service for pre-school children (up to 5 years). The idea began in Portage, Wisconsin (USA) which is where the name comes from. Established in England and Wales in the 1970s.

Safeguarding lead
A generic term used here to cover roles including Child protection officer/lead/coordinator; Designated Liaison Person; Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO); Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL); First point of contact for Child Safeguarding Statement; "Named person".

SEND-friendly archives
An archive service where everyone shares responsibility for ensuring that people with special educational needs and disabilities feel understood, valued, and able to engage and participate.

Signalong
A key word sign-supported communication system which is based on British Sign Language and is used in spoken word order. It uses speech, sign, body language, facial expression and voice tone to reference the link between sign and word.

Widgit
A proprietary, licensed system of pictorial communication symbols.

Appendices

Further support and resources
For and by SEN teachers
www.senteacher.org/home/ and www.senteacher.org/links/.

Cultural and heritage sector
Accessible Exhibitions for All: A Guide to Co-Designing Exhibitions with Disabled People. History of Place project 2018,
http://historyof.place/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/HOP_TK_Design_Exhibs_Final_PRINT.pdf.

Engaging Deaf and Disabled Young People with Heritage.
History of Place project 2018
historyof.place/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/HOP_TK_Design_YoungPeople__Final_PRINT.pdf.

Hurdles to Participation of Children, Families and Young People in Museums: Literature Review.
Kids in Museums 2016
https://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/resources/hurdles-to-participation-of-children-families-and-young-people-in-museums-literature-review/.

Re-Imagine. Improving Access to the Arts, Galleries and Museums for People with Learning Disabilities. Lemos & Crane, 2014,
https://www.lemosandcrane.co.uk/resources/Re-imagineImprovingaccess..pdf.

Special Schools and Museums Toolkit. South East Museum Development, 2018,
https://southeastmuseums.org/resource-library/special-schools-and-museum-toolkit/.

Welcoming Families with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
Kids in Museums,
https://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/resources/welcoming-special-needs-families/.

Working with Hospital Schools. A Practical Toolkit. National Portrait Gallery. 2008
https://www.npg.org.uk/assets/media/Projects/hospital-schools/npghospitalschoolstoolkit.pdf.

National governments

Ireland:
Special Needs Education.
https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Special-Education/.

UK:
England: *SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years* (England),
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25.

Northern Ireland: *Special Educational Needs (SEN).*
https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/special-educational-needs-sen.

Scotland: *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice*
https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-code-practice-revised-edition/

Wales: *Special Educational Needs: Guidance for Carers and Parents*
https://gov.wales/special-educational-needs-guidance-carers-and-parents.

All links correct at July 2021.

Case studies

These case studies were provided in response to a call-out for experiences from the archive sector to include in this toolkit. We are immensely grateful to all the organisations and people for sharing their ideas and experiences with the wider sector.

There are many more case studies and examples of practice from the museum sector on the GEM website. Many relevant individual webpage resources are tagged with SEN, SEND, or Autism. GEM's twice-yearly magazine "Case Studies" often features SEND-friendly practice.

Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Ltd: Blueberry Academy/York 1905

Background and aims

In 2017/2018 a team of researchers at the Universities of Leeds and York, led by Simon Popple, embarked on a project to investigate how the online digital storytelling platform YARN might be used to broaden access to archive collections and enable collaborations between archives services and their local communities. York 1905 was one of the strands of this project, involving a collaboration between Explore York Archives and Blueberry Academy, which provides specialist support for adults with a range of special educational needs.

Our aim was to work with Blueberry Academy's young trainees to create activities that allowed them to develop confidence and build skills in working with our archival content around the theme of local identity. This strand took an experimental, responsive approach to discover how the YARN platform might best serve the needs of SEND learners and how it might be further developed to enable more inclusive use of the resource. Learners on the Academy's Citizenship programme worked with an archivist and a professional Storyteller to learn about the history of the Melbourne Centre and the local area, using physical and digitized archive materials. The learners then developed and consolidated their findings through role-play and artwork, which was recorded digitally for the purpose of adding to YARN stories and sharing with other trainees, families and the wider public.

Description

We worked specifically with a group of eight learners, who had a range of educational needs, including autism and Downs Syndrome. Over the course of a number of initial preparatory meetings, we chose to make the Melbourne Centre – home to the Blueberry Academy – the focus of the sessions, as it was a space the learners felt comfortable in and could relate to. The Melbourne Centre was originally built as a Methodist church hall in 1905. Before we began the sessions Blueberry looked at the concept of history with their learners through the creation of a timeline of major historic events, whilst I researched the history of the building and key events in York in 1905 to set the scene.

Over the course of three two-hour sessions held at the Melbourne Centre over consecutive weeks, I worked with the Storyteller to look at the history of the building in a number of ways. I had a preliminary meeting with the Storyteller to work out a broad framework for the three sessions. In week one we looked at the physical building, and helped the learners think about why the building was erected at all. From this they compiled a list of pros and cons (backed by the archival research) and each learner had to

make a decision as to whether they would have built the centre. The learners also had the opportunity to role play as members of the building committee so that they could talk about the building project in pairs.

Towards the end of the first session we discussed with the learners what York was like at the time the Melbourne Centre was built in 1905, and how it compared to today. The learners created a list of things they wanted to find out from the archive photographic collections for the following week (including, did the circus ever come to York!). Between the first and second sessions I researched the questions and images the learners had asked about, printed out the images and brought them with me to the second session. We spent a lot of that session using the images as prompts for thinking about York in 1905, and looking in some depth about how different it is compared to the 21st century. Topics included transport, buildings, education and the place of SEND citizens in society.

In the final session the learners began using digital copies of the images I'd used the week before to start work on their individual stories, documenting what they had learnt over the previous two weeks. This work was initially on paper storyboards, and then they continued their work on YARN after the end of the taught sessions.

Outcomes and impact

All eight learners took an active part in the three sessions, and it was clear from the start that they were engaged with the subject at hand. History is not normally taught at Blueberry Academy – the focus is on employability skills and communication – so for a number in the group this was a completely new concept.

The group successfully created a number of stories on YARN and were happy to talk about the stories they had learned about the building of the Melbourne Centre and about York at that time.

The archival photographs really stimulated the discussion, particularly when coupled with the creative elements.

The most exciting impact to come from this project was a new partnership that was developed between Blueberry Academy and York Museums Trust, which runs York's Castle Museum. Job coaching and volunteering are key elements of Blueberry Academy, as one of their aims is to support learners to gain the skills to find work. One of the new learners really showed his aptitude for

history and for learning facts during our sessions, and this prompted Blueberry Academy to support him to find a volunteer position as a costumed interpreter at York Castle Museum. This was not a partnership they had ever thought of pursuing before.

Overall, the working method we created for the workshops with Blueberry has really informed our thinking as archivists. In practice we have learned a lot about the possibility of taking archival surrogates out of the archive and into the community, about working in alternative settings to animate these resources and how to initiate learning, enquiry and creative responses. One of the most positive aspects of the project has involved thinking about how we work with existing resources, even if these seem limited (in the case of this project we only used photographic materials). By being creative with materials it has proved possible to identify useful starting points for engagement and conversation, creating opportunities for more in-depth research and sharing of knowledge.

Reflections on what worked well/less well

Overall, the project worked really well – the learners were engaged across all three sessions and were happy to voice their ideas (although some were more willing than others). Arguably this was down to the abilities of the Storyteller, as it meant we could get across what we wanted to teach in a more creative and engaging way than by the archives alone. The small group setting really worked as it meant both myself and the Storyteller could get to know the learners individually and find out more about their interests, which helped guide the following sessions.

Whilst it is arguably more work for the archivist, having the sessions being learner-led was really brilliant, and ultimately I think the outputs on YARN were better as a result. The first session was fairly well planned out ahead of time, but the second and third sessions were built around the learners' ideas for the photographs. The

learners did appear to be more invested in the project as a result of helping define the scope of the archives to be used, and as a result, they got more out of the sessions.

Outside of the initial scope of this project, we planned a visit to the archives service so that the learners could see the archives in person. Interestingly, this really didn't go very well and I don't feel the learners got very much out of it– being creative and engaging is the way to go, ideally using visual materials rather than particularly text-heavy ones.

Top tips

If you can find a small amount of external funding to bring something extra to your project then do consider it, but even if you can't, do give it a go – the professionals working with SEND learners in education should be willing to advise and support you. Our Storyteller really brought the sessions to life for the learners, and the overall cost was around £500.

Be willing to move location. In some circumstances it is easier to engage SEND learners in their own educational environments. Archives services can be daunting at the best of times, so be prepared to travel with surrogate collections if needs be.

Future development plans

Whilst this was a one-off project, we are looking at ways we can work again with Simon Popple and Blueberry Academy in the not-too-distant future. Other funding avenues are being explored to take the project further, and as part of that we would be working again with Blueberry Academy in new ways.

Laura Yeoman, Archivist (Access and Engagement)

M&S Company Archive: Working with learners with social, emotional and mental health disturbance

Background and aims

The M&S Company Archive is the official home of Marks & Spencer heritage and a working business archive, housed in the Michael Marks building on the University of Leeds campus. As well as storage of our collection of over 71,000 items relating to the history of M&S, it's also home to the Marks in Time exhibition, which tells the story of the company from market stall to global retailer. Alongside the public exhibition we run programmes for schools, community groups and higher education learners. We also offer a varied public events programme ranging from lunchtime talks to beer tastings to decade-themed activity days. We opened our doors to the public in March 2012, and since then have welcomed over 115,000 visitors and almost 16,000 school visitors, although much of our offer moved to digital delivery earlier this year in response to Covid-19.

The collection is a bit of a dream for an archive education officer! We look after a wide range of items, from the documents, images and business records you'd expect of a business archive collection to clothing, film, food packaging and design work. And, naturally, lots of pants. It's a visually engaging collection, and it's full of items that learners can relate to easily, being mostly connected to shopping, clothing and food. We've played to these strengths in the links we draw to the curriculum, and as a major retailer we can further connect our workshops to real-world experiences.

We began working with Oastlers School in September 2019, after Robert Fairbairn, Head of the Careers department, visited our Marks in Time exhibition as part of a University of Leeds campus tour with one of his students. Robert saw the potential of our programme to engage Oastlers students and introduce them to the past and present of a major retailer whilst showcasing a range of career options. We saw an opportunity to work with a new audience, engage young

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people with the collection and develop our programme to be more accessible and inclusive. We aimed to run three adapted workshops for Oastlers students in the autumn term, evaluate, review and then adapt further workshops for the spring and summer terms.

Oastlers School, in Bradford, is a co-educational school of 94 learners of secondary school age who have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) disturbance. Young people are referred to the school by the local authority. Specialist staff drawn from a range of teaching and care disciplines work to provide a highly personalised, positive learning experience that aims to replace negative experiences of education, or sense of failure, with success. Over 70% of pupils' emotional, social and mental health issues are linked to attachment difficulties, trauma and loss (through bereavement or loss of

significant relationships). As well as an attachment and relationship-centred approach, the school offers a range of different therapies such as art, music and talking therapy.

Description

All our school workshops are designed to be hands-on and very interactive, providing an experience that is both fun and unique to the archive.

Working with Robert, we decided to run two of our most popular workshops, Proof of the Pudding and Birth of a Brand. Robert felt that the pupils would find the hands-on nature of the workshops, as well as the content (food and advertising respectively) and career links, engaging and relevant. Proof of the Pudding uses our M&S Chocolate Melt in the Middle Pudding to explore food technology, looking at the science of baking and chocolate as well as product design… and of course there's a taste test too. This is always a particularly fun workshop to lead as we conduct experiments, design puddings and make our own ice cream. The Oastlers pupils were enthusiastic from the start and created some incredible product ideas, as well as showing a keen interest in the wider context of how M&S works as a business.

Birth of a Brand has more of a focus on archives, so we're going to share how we worked with Oastlers to adapt and run this workshop for their pupils. The intended learning outcomes of this workshop are; to understand the nature and purpose of an archive, to learn about different forms of advertising and how they have changed over time, to identify different features of advertisements, to gain understanding of what makes a successful advertising campaign, and to use storyboards to create a TV advertisement.

In a non-adapted Birth of a Brand workshop (the version typically provided for visiting school groups of up to 30 students) pupils discuss what advertising is and the forms it takes, thinking about their own experiences of advertising and branding. We discuss famous brands, how we recognize them and feel about them. Pupils then complete an activity to identify their own 'brand values' and work in groups to create a brand name, logo and slogan. Next, pupils find out about the evolution of M&S from a Penny Bazaar market stall in 1884 to a global retailer today. Key moments are highlighted in an exhibition tour, with a focus on how the company has chosen to present itself to the public throughout its history. Pupils work in groups to compare M&S advertising campaigns from different periods, identifying the target customer and analysing the methods used to engage and persuade. Using what they've learned pupils write, storyboard and film their own TV advert for a product from their invented brand using our iPads. As a group we watch all the newly filmed adverts, with a vote for the most successful advert and a prize awarded to the winning team.

The main factors that contributed to the success of our workshops with Oastlers were communication and flexibility. Communication with the school before the workshops was crucial, as it allowed us to prepare for the particular needs of the groups attending. Robert was very clear and open with me, explaining that although the groups would be small (5-15 pupils per group) there would be a broad range of ability within those groups. He also explained that pupils struggle with long periods of classroom-based activity. They need to move around, use different learning styles throughout and feel able to ask questions and contribute their own views.

So preparing for the Oastlers workshops involved moving the order of activities around slightly to have the exhibition tour sooner in the running order, adding a break and removing the vote and prize element (due to the small size of the groups this wouldn't have worked). The main element of preparation though was mindset. Based on my conversations with Robert and having some previous

experience of working with young people in alternative education settings, I was aware that each workshop would be different and that we would need to be very adaptable on the day.

From the beginning of the first workshop it was clear that the young people were interested, curious and keen to get involved. It was also clear that we would have to work at their pace to maintain that interest, which made each of the workshops feel like a real joint enterprise with an exchange of information both ways, with the young people steering the pace. This meant being open to following discussion points as they developed whilst still maintaining the focus of the workshop, bringing us back from tangents once the question had been answered.

Being flexible and adaptable was also key. As with any education session, you notice pretty quickly when your audience is not engaged. With the Oastlers groups it was important to act swiftly during the workshops to avoid the young people disengaging completely. For example, this meant condensing the 'target customer' task and giving the pupils a wider range of archives to look at so that they could choose the ones they found most interesting, rather than working with allotted sources. We also changed the 'brand values' exercise from an individual, written task to a group discussion task, as one of the pupils had lower levels of literacy. This pupil was new to the school and had joined the visit to us at the last minute.

Outcomes and impact
For us, the outcomes have been

- A strong relationship with the school – I have met with staff from a range of disciplines and met pupils with a range of interests. We're now working with teachers across the Careers, Food Technology and Business Studies departments.
- A positive response from the pupils - We asked informal evaluation questions at the end of each session to get an impression of how the pupils felt about the workshops. Further feedback was provided by school staff to help us evaluate and review the session.
- New approaches to our workshops and delivery – We've further developed activities and approaches to be more accessible. This has linked to other areas of our programmes including our work with Home Educated learners with SEND.
- An insight into how others see the collection, giving a new viewpoint on how we can use the collection and our workshops to look at supporting careers education in a more focused way.

Oastlers said
"It is hugely beneficial to engage with external partners as part of our strategy to empower our young people to help them plan and manage their own futures. Working with Caroline at the M&S Company Archive has been a delight for staff and learners alike. The ethos of workshop delivery was perfect for a wide range of our learners because the sessions were interactive, educational and above all fun!
Our learners do not easily attach, especially in unfamiliar surroundings, so to have a workshop format that is interactive and engaging worked right from the start. The setting and facilities also helped, being able to break during the session to look at the archive exhibits took the whole experience to a new level. All our learners will have heard of M&S, however visiting the archive allowed them to meet new people, engage and gently broaden their horizons."

Reflections
Successes
Planning lots of practical and discussion-based activities worked well. Allowing choice by providing a wide range of materials and sources to work with meant that the pupils felt that they were active in the workshop, not passively receiving information and instructions. Where our typical workshop would feature a longer period of listening, we broke this up into alternative activities to keep everyone engaged and this proved to be successful.

For improvement
Less successful was our break programming. We had programmed one break in the session, but we will allow time for more than one break in future. I hadn't appreciated how much the pupils would benefit from a change of surroundings and the chance to explore the whole archive exhibition, and we will plan in more movement for future sessions.

Top Tips
Establish open communication with the organisation

Prepare a few alternative activities, or variations of an activity, that can be easily slotted in if you need to change the pace, format or subject matter

Create activities that allow choice and self-direction within the boundaries of the task

Vary the type of activities

Let the young people steer the pace, be open to discussion and exploring tangents

Future development plans
We continue to work with Oastlers and we're hoping to welcome them back to the archive in the near future. The school has recently opened a second site, so we will be working with more groups of pupils. The school is in the process of building connections with their local M&S stores for vocational experience, and we plan to develop a new careers-based workshop for Oastlers pupils that will also be available for other groups of young people with SEMH disturbance.

Working with Oastlers continues to be a hugely rewarding experience, and we are using our unique attributes as an archive and as an organisation to support the remarkable work of this school. I can't stress enough how impressive the school is, young people with SEMH disturbance often struggle to learn well in conventional school environments and Oastlers is providing an important alternative. As an Education Officer it's also been a real honour and inspiration to work alongside the Oastlers staff and pupils, serving as a reminder that the experiences we can share through our collections are truly unique and often quietly powerful.

Caroline Bunce, Education & Outreach Officer

National Museum of Scotland – Schools Programmes

Background and aims
The National Museum of Scotland, based in Edinburgh, welcomes around 45,000 in-person school visitors annually. Research in 2018 highlighted there was a low percentage of Special Schools visiting the museum. At the same time, teachers were reporting increased levels of Additional Support Needs (ASN) within their classes. Our aim was therefore to increase accessibility for a range of pupils and schools to the programme at the museum.

Description
The Community Engagement team, Schools Learning Officer, Schools and Groups Booking Administrator and Learning Enablers have all increased access to the schools programme through a range of actions.

The Community Engagement Team established a highly successful widening access programme for the museum, which included working with local families, organisations and staff across the organisation. This led to the creation of a range of resources including Sensory backpacks, Communication Cards and Visual Stories, as well as a range of successful events such as Early doors and After-hours events for children and young people with autism.

We worked with The Yard, a charity who provide adventure play experiences for disabled children, young people and their families. They provided training sessions for our team who work with schools and provided advice on how we could update our resources, booking system and programme to better suit children with a range of ASN. They also provided Signalong training for the wider team.

Some team members received Audio descriptive training which they then shared with the rest of the delivery team.

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We also ran a consultation session with teachers. From this, and as a result of the training, we created a box of sensory resources that can be used by visiting schools whilst taking part in our workshops. These included coloured acetates, fidget toys, ear-defenders, and magnifying sheets. At the start of 2020, one of our team created a topic-specific sensory box of activities to be used with pupils with ASN who may need additional support during one of our Dinosaur workshops. This contained a range of resources including a tactile book, weighted dinosaur toy, tactile counting game, and a 'feely kit' of the different environments dinosaurs would have lived in.

When school sessions moved online in 2020, as a result of the pandemic, teachers could choose to watch live or view the recording back at a time that suited their pupils, a pre-recorded version was also available. This allowed teachers to watch the session in advance and adapt sections as needed for pupils with ASN, to break it up into smaller sections and pause as required for their class needs. During November 2020 - June 2021 we reached 25,281 teachers and pupils through our Digital Schools Sessions.

We updated our booking system to try to capture feedback from teachers about the range of ASN their pupils had, as well as any triggers or useful information our team should know in advance. The staff running our sessions now contact teachers in advance to discuss what adjustments can be made to sessions, or the resources that we could provide to assist with their visit. This can vary from large-print copies of resources to a quieter space to eat their lunch.

We have tried a range of ways to make documents and archival sources more accessible too through providing transcriptions, creating high quality photographs of documents, and by having simple explanatory handouts to go alongside the documents. All of these can then be provided in advance, if required, to pupils who may find it easier to view them on a digital device, or by adapting them in a particular way.

Our Community Engagement team established weekly family sessions for children who are D/deaf or have Visual Impairments. The children taking part in these were referred to us via the Assisted Support for Learning team who work in mainstream schools. During the pandemic these sessions moved online and took place over Zoom. Participants could opt to have sensory resources posted to them in advance of each session and D/deaf sessions were captioned and the musician signed throughout.

Outcomes and impact
An increased number of Special Schools visiting the National Museum of Scotland and taking part in programmes delivered by museum staff.

An increased level of staff confidence in developing and delivering sessions for children with Additional Support Needs.

Positive feedback from teachers and pupils about their visit to the museum:

"Showing less privileged learners that the museum is also for them and can be fun and enlightening is huge, especially for the pupils I work with who have significant social emotional and behavioural challenges."

"Good liaison beforehand to ensure session was at appropriate level for our pupils. Very enjoyable session in many ways."

"The staff were amazing and adapted the activity to help the pupils participate and be included in the workshop. The materials were fantastic and the two educators helped us as much as possible to have a fun and smooth day at the museum. All type of multi-sensory activities are great for our pupils and [are]…experiences they don't usually have access to."

Reflections on what worked well/less well

This was a really worthwhile project to have embarked upon and we feel it's made our whole programme more accessible. Many of the measures we introduced were not hugely expensive and we could make adaptations using many of the built-in features on Microsoft programmes such as Word and PowerPoint. Being guided by expert staff from The Yard was invaluable.

By working with children and young people from Special Schools, our team became aware that many schools didn't realise that a visit to the museum was free of charge, and that it was open throughout the year. By repeating this message to all of our visiting groups, our team has seen many children and young people return to the museum with their families.

What worked well:

- Sending letters to Special Schools to state we can adapt sessions and work with schools and teachers to develop visits to suit their needs
- Individual members of staff liaising with teachers before their visit so they could adapt their session and understand the needs of the pupils visiting

Less well:

- Our booking system for in-person visits, asking schools to book in advance, give specific timings, numbers and details about their visit, doesn't always suit Special Schools.

Top tips

Keep asking teachers, pupils and families for their feedback all the way through.

Find a local partner/charity/organisation who can give you advice, training and support.

Making things more accessible doesn't have to cost a lot of money, just give things a go!

Future development plans

During the pandemic, our schools programme moved online and we found that many Special Schools continued to engage with us virtually. Going forward, we are considering how we can continue to support children with ASN and Special Schools during the 2021/22 school year, with limited visits in person available and an increased use of digital resources.

Our Community Engagement team have also recently launched a Sensory Map for the museum and we plan to monitor take up and gather feedback on this.

Sarah Cowie, Interim Engagement Manager
Jane Miller, Community Engagement Manager

Britten Pears Arts: SEND learners at the Red House

Background and aims

The [Red House](#) is the historic home of the composer Benjamin Britten and his partner the singer Peter Pears, located in Aldeburgh, Suffolk. It comprises the historic house, kept as Britten and Pears knew it; Britten's composition studio, similarly in its original state; the two men's library, which also functions as a performance space for small recitals; a museum gallery telling the story of the two men's lives and music; and a large purpose-built archive building including reading room, housing the papers of Britten and Pears and others in their creative circle. The complex is set within extensive grounds that are also open to the public.

There is an active [programme of sessions and events available to schools](#) at the Red House, both on and offsite, chiefly to pupils in KS1 and KS2. Numerous staff-led sessions have been developed to support various key National Curriculum areas. These support not merely music and history, as might be expected, but also science and logical reasoning, with topics such as Make an Opera in a Day, The Science of Sound, Murder in the Orchestra (a mystery involving logical reasoning as well as music education), Fire! (using the fire at Britten's concert hall in 1969 as a gateway into a science-centred session), Music Through Time, and so on. The vast majority of these sessions involve a visit to the archive to see material tailored to the session and to visit the main strongroom.

Description

In autumn 2019, working in collaboration with Autism and Nature, the Red House set out to develop sessions suitable for SEND learners, and hosted four visits from three different local special schools. The learners were typically in Years 9-10 and the profile of their needs varied considerably, both between schools and within each party: some pupils were non-verbal and/or required mobility

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aids, and positions on the spectra of learning difficulty and/or autism varied considerably. The sessions were developed in partnership with teachers at each school so that they could be developed to be as beneficial as possible for the pupils.

Accordingly, each session was tailored to the needs of each group, but each was built around a similar basic set of elements:
- Meet at Aldeburgh beach by Benjamin Britten memorial sculpture and explore the environment (this element was omitted for those parties that included pupils with mobility restrictions)
- Introduction to the Red House by Collections and Learning Curator; some music making and introduction to the four main groups of instruments (percussion, brass, woodwind, strings).
- Visit to Red House (this element was omitted for those parties that included pupils with mobility restrictions)
- Visit to Gallery exhibit on Britten's opera 'Noye's Fludde' to see the animal masks worn by child performers and try out the "slung mugs" percussion set that Britten developed for children to play in the piece. Learners had the chance either here or in the archive to try on replica masks.
- Visit to Library to hear a professional harpist play and to try out her instrument
- Visit to Archive to see original materials. The aim, as it is for all school visits, was to provide a wide variety of types of material so that pupils' different interests might be sparked. For students with moderate learning difficulties these included written materials such as Britten's school report card and a sample musical score as well as more visual materials such as set designs. For higher-needs pupils the focus was upon more visual materials, showing the original 'Noye's Fludde' animal masks side by side with replicas that the pupils could try on. For almost all pupils there was also a visit to the archive strongroom to show the environment in which historic materials are kept (only for one group, with a high proportion of pupils with mobility aids, was

this not possible, the constraint being the time that it would have taken for each to be taken individually in the small lift).
- Making music of their own, based on the experiences of the day, and for those who had visited the beach at the start of the day using materials found there.

The Archive visit, then, was meshed closely into activities across the whole of the site and tailored to the needs of specific groups of pupils.
Feedback from the schools was positive and the pupils were responsive and enthusiastic- feedback comment can be found below.

Outcomes and impact
The project was a huge success in terms of developing a series of engaging and inspirational visits and inspiring both the teachers and pupils. There were 6 highly successful school visits, all themed differently, linking to the need and requirements of the specific schools.

The project saw a strong partnership develop between both The Red House and Autism and Nature as well as with the partner schools. This saw a series of follow up sessions after the project was completed. Joe Carr, Collection and Learning Curator held a number of follow up assemblies and class sessions at the participating schools and a positive relationship has developed between the schools and The Red House.

Feedback from the schools was fantastic to see as the example below indicates:

"I have just had the class that visited you and the first thing they said when entering the room was "we visited the Red House". We continued for the next 20 minutes discussing, enthusiastically, what they had enjoyed, what they had seen and other information about Benjamin Britten.

We were amazed at how much they had taken in and remembered. They all said they would like to return and the other adult in the room who learnt about Benjamin Britten at school did not know about the house but from the children's excitement and enthusiasm is now hoping to visit the house sometime in the future.

It must have been an excellent workshop if the pupils have been left so fired up! Well done.

We are delighted that the project has led to a number of follow up projects and activities (which are highlighted below)

Reflections on what worked well/less well

The school sessions were a great success and we are proud of how our site worked for these children. A number of elements worked well for us:

- The variety in sessions was a huge success. We were not rigid in our format so could adapt and change the sessions depending on the school and children's needs.
- Providing pupils with the chance to explore all the different environments on site (archive, strong room, historic house, museum space, and gardens) was really important and worked very well with all the young people. It should be noted that simply entering the archive and seeing this new environment was itself a learning experience, even before the pupils encountered archive material.
- We ensured there were lots of hands-on activities linked to site and sessions. This worked extremely well with all groups, whether it was music instruments to explore, lights to engage with, or materials to handle.
- Our offer of a pre-visit to teachers beforehand was very beneficial. Talking with teachers prior to the visits allowed us to develop a rewarding day and helped us understand what they wanted from a visit to the site - they know their children.

- The Collections and Learning Curator also visited the children at their school prior to the visits. This helped the children feel at ease- they got to know a member of staff before they visited.
- We provided all schools with a visual story before they visited. This PowerPoint/film helped the schools introduce their children to the site. The feedback was very positive and children already knew what to expect from the day.
- The children were given freedom of the site in terms of being made welcome across the whole site.
- We ensured that actual collections were available to share with the young people in some form. The variety of collections and stories available was a real positive of the day. There was no dumbing down of standard school sessions.

The sessions were extremely successful but there are elements we could develop:

- We could work to make sure there are always handling collections available for children to explore physically. The children were keen to engage with the stories and collections and touch is a key way to do this. We would make sure there are more replicas or safe to touch artefacts available. You should never underestimate the importance of having handling collections available for children.

Top tips

Handling is so important - can you make sure there are replicas available for children to handle- costume, replica newspaper, documents? The children were keen to engage with the stories and collections and touch is a key way to do this. We would make sure there are more replicas or safe to touch artefacts available. You should never underestimate the importance of having handling collections available for children.

Volunteer support - our sessions were successful due to support from passionate learning volunteers. Having one or two friendly volunteers to help with the sessions is very beneficial. However make sure that the school and children know about these additional adults before they visit – include them in your visual story.

Flexibility - make sure your session is flexible enough to go in any direction- if something doesn't work, or something sparks special interest, can you adapt the plan or do something completely different? The Red House sessions worked as we could extend elements or drop parts depending on the children that day.

Modular structure – the fact that our sessions were made of various elements combined meant that we could remove or replace elements to customise sessions for the needs of a particular group.

Whole staff support/commitment. Make sure your whole team - from front of house to gardeners - are aware of the children and their needs and are supportive of the visit.

Remember that simply visiting an archive is a new experience for almost everyone: things that an archivist takes for granted, like thick strongroom doors, climate-controlled spaces and mobile shelving, are new and dramatic for people outside the profession.

Future development plans
The project has led to a number of developments in this area.

- The Red House has developed sensory boxes/packs for The Red House, Museum Gallery and Archive building so that we can engage SEN visitors with these spaces. These were developed in the summer 2020 and available to the public from April 2021.
- We will develop a new visual story film to send to schools.

- We are delighted that Autism and Nature were awarded funding and are keen to develop another project with The Red House and SEN schools. This worked to foster a deeper level of engagement with the landscape of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and its biodiversity and conservation, for children with autism and related disabilities, including profound and multiple learning disabilities. Over January-April 2021 we worked with children from three local special schools at The Red House, Red House Gardens and the coastal landscape around Aldeburgh. Via Zoom we explored the site, explored soundscapes and recorded the children's voices and other sounds made by them, as well as natural sounds that they heard in the landscape and music they performed to celebrate their observations, learning and experiences. The recordings were edited and put onto CDs for pupils at home.
- On the basis of this project and report the Red House hopes to develop this offering to SEND learners in the coming year.
- The Red House are keen to maintain the relationship with the schools through continued follow up sessions, visits and partnerships.
- The experience of working with these SEND learners will feed into the Red House offer to the general public: we had already planned to provide a visual story on our website and to take other steps such as staff training to ensure that for persons with SEND the experience of visiting is one of welcome and inclusivity, but this project sharpened our awareness of what would be most useful in this area.

Joe Carr, Collections and Learning Curator
Christopher Hilton, Head of Archive and Library

The British Library: using the sound archive with audiences with additional needs

Background and aims

The British Library is home to the nation's [sound archive](#), an extraordinary collection of over 6.5 million recordings of speech, music, wildlife and the environment. The Unlocking Our Sound Heritage project aimed to preserve and provide access to thousands of the UK's rare and unique sound recordings. Now into its fourth year, the ambitious, five-year project is increasing awareness and enjoyment of sound today.

The British Library's Access and Outreach Programme consists of free workshops for children and adults with special educational needs and disabilities and takes learners on a journey to discover the Library's unique collections. Creative outreach projects for community groups, young people, and children and adults with SEND are delivered in partnership with a range of charities and organisations.

Description

The Library runs a number of projects using the sound archives to engage visitors with additional needs. Each project lasts between 6-8 sessions and is run by 1 or 2 creative freelancers, including artists, storytellers, and poets. The projects are planned in partnership with the partner organisation to make sure they are designed with the participant's needs and abilities at the heart. The Sound Archive is a fantastic resource to inspire learners with complex needs and allows us to use sound to create multi-sensory experiences. Below are listed four examples of recent projects, each inspire by the sound archives. During Covid-19 we have adapted some of our projects to run online.

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Sense UK Community Project

This eight-month family project was in partnership with [Sense UK](#) a national charity supporting and campaigning for people who are deafblind and for those with sensory impairments. It was delivered by two artists Emma McGarry and Judith Brocklehurst, who have vast experience of working with young people and families with complex needs and profound learning difficulties.

The project started with a taster session, using the opportunity to share the Library's broad and diverse collections, ascertain the families' interests and make sure their voices were at the forefront of the project's focus and development from its inception. Sessions continued once a month on Saturday mornings, taking place both at the SENSE UK family Centre and at the Library. The project was inspired by the Sound Archive and explored how sound can be made visible and tangible. The project was designed to be collaborative with families developing ideas alongside the artists.

Over the course of the project participants created a giant sensory marble-run. They made different size and shaped marble runs, using a range of materials, incorporating the different sounds made by the paths. They used contact microphones (microphones that respond to vibrations) to explore different outputs of the movement of marbles as they went through the run. On their visits to the Library, the marble run was installed on the accessible ramp that leads from the ground floor to the lower ground, giving the public a chance to see this unique sculpture in action. The families also created hand-made records using sandpaper and other materials applied to the surface of a disc to create a sensory experience. At the end of the project the young people handed over an archive box containing their work to the Library. The box contains some of their records, a film and a curated selection of sound recordings made by the group.

Choice Support Project

Choice Support is a social care charity that provides support to people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs. This project built on some of the activities that had been developed as part of the SENSE project, as well as adapting or developing new ones that suited the participants more.

Inspired by sounds from the Library's Wildlife and Environmental, and World and Traditional Music collections, four participants and their 1-2-1 support workers took part in six workshops run by artist Judith Brocklehurst. The group took part in a series of 6 workshops where they listened to sounds, recorded their own sounds, built sculptures to form a sound landscape, experimented with amplifying sounds, made their own records and experimented in layering different sounds. Many of the participants were non-verbal and Choice Support wanted to use the project to explore forms of communication other than speech. Artist Judith commented: 'Some of the making activities were really successful. There were moments where - as a group - we created an amazing experimental sound landscape, which combined archive sound and sounds made and collected by the participants.'

Jack Tizard School Project

In our project with Jack Tizard School, which had to be paused due to Covid-19, we are working with a class of young people with profound and Multiple learning Disabilities from Jack Tizard School. The project focuses on ideas around 'the Journey'. This could be the physical journey from school to the library or the journey through the day. During the first session sounds from everyday life were downloaded onto talking tiles for the pupils to listen to. The session also explored the sounds that can be made from everyday objects within the classroom and contact microphones were used to emphasise the texture and vibrations of the sounds. This project will eventually continue where the sound archives will be used to inspire elements of the project and the participants will record and listen to sounds from their own journeys from the school to the library, as well as explore sounds within the British Library.

Seeing Sound: Visual responses by people living with aphasia

Seeing Sound was a partnership between the British Library, the Free Space Project (London) and The Brain Charity (Liverpool) to explore language through natural sounds taken from the sound archive. The project was designed for people living with aphasia, an impairment in language following an injury to the brain, most commonly from a stroke in the left hemisphere.

Between November 2020 and February 2021, we worked with a group from the Free Space Project, London, alongside a group from the Brain Charity, Liverpool. The Free Space Project provides arts and community initiatives for patients from Kentish Town Health Centre and they work in collaboration with the NHS through a social prescribing partnership. The Brain Charity, based in Liverpool, offers emotional support, practical help and social activities to anyone with a neurological condition and to their family, friends, and carers.

Due to Covid-19 the groups met online to explore sounds from the environmental and wildlife collection with artist and speech and language therapist Cat Andrew. From historical coastal sounds to the ambience of woodlands, the groups were supported to create visual artworks visualising different sounds. The participants were sent a pack of art materials before the project started. The participants work can be [viewed online](#).

The external evaluation evidenced the huge impact the project had on participants. They spoke about their improved artistic and creative skills, how their confidence in their own creative expression had flourished, as well as their increased sense of community. For some there were physical benefits such as a noticeable improvement in communication and fine motor skills. One participant commented: *'I feel amazed. I found it difficult to use my hand. But I managed to draw.'*

Outcomes and impact
Each of these projects are designed to increase the confidence of participants to engage with the library, its collections and creative processes to spark wellbeing and enjoyment. Through each session and the building up of a relationship between the artist/s, participants and staff we have seen participants become more relaxed and comfortable within the Library surroundings as the project progressed.

During the Choice Support project the project helped to widen the support workers expectations of what the adults they support can achieve as well as provide them with new ideas on how to run creative activities beyond the project. One support worker commented: 'There are many new ways I can interact with the service users I support through music and doing art and craft at home to help calm them down and to also bring them together.' This idea is also built on with the other projects where bringing an artist into a school environment means that staff gain new insights and ideas of future ways they can work with their students that they can use beyond the project.

Reflections on what worked well/less well
Building trust- it can take a few sessions for the participants to relax and feel comfortable with new people/ in a new environment. We always plan to run the first workshop in their own setting so that by the time they first come to the library they already see a familiar face and feel more relaxed.

Creativity/ multi-sensory- each project uses different materials and opportunities for the participants to get creative. We try not to make sure there are a number of activities available in case some participants do not feel comfortable/ are not engaged with something.

Support workers are often crucial in the success of the project. In particular the Choice Support project where sometimes the support workers were different each week. Where possible asking for continuity and also offering the opportunity for a meeting before the project starts will help with the expectations of how they might help through the project.

Top tips
- Being collaborative is key- by working in partnership with the school or community organisation you can make sure the project really is being designed with everyone in mind.

- Having a flexible and adaptable approach. Don't map out an entire project in advance. It is important for participants to be able to take a sense of ownership over the direction of these creative projects.

- Running a pilot session to understand the needs and abilities of the participants. If you know the level of communication/dexterity of participants this really helps the artist to plan appropriate activities as part of the project.

- Multi-sensory approach- it has been really important to creat activities that use all senses and offer participants different ways of engaging.

- Facilities- please keep in mind what facilities the participants might need. The British Library currently does not have a Changing Places facility which would be essential for some participants. This was taken into account with the Jack Tizard Project and we had arranged to have a Mobiloo on site during their visits to the library.

- Investing in equipment. Talking tiles are a great resource to use with SEND young audiences. Apps such as the Keezy App on iPads were also a great resource for recording, listening and layering sounds.

Future development plans
Some of our projects are currently paused and we hope to be able to run them in the near future, including re-starting our Jack Tizard School Project. In the meantime where possible we have taken programmes online such as the Seeing Sound Project. We are currently working in partnership with Joy of Sound, an organisation that run participatory music sessions and combined arts projects with adults with physical and learning disabilities. During the year they have moved their workshops online and have been using our sound archives to take participants on a 'journey'.

During the sessions, through listening to the sounds the participants 'travelled' to the origins of the recordings and explores their context, history and built relations between the recordings and the participants.

We have also developed a series of multi-sensory videos that use a selection of sounds from the sound archives that can be sent to organisations or used in sessions online where participants can listen and explore materials and textures to make sounds within their own settings.

Emma Tutton, Access & Outreach Programme Manager

SWOT analysis

Here are some initial pointers to get you going - there are more detailed questions in the Assess section which you might find helpful.

	Helpful to becoming more SEND-friendly	Harmful to becoming more SEND-friendly
Internal to your service	Strengths	Weaknesses
External to your service	Opportunities	Threats

Once you've done the SWOT analysis you will need to prioritise what you can tackle quickly and in the short-term, and what will take longer and need more resources. Remember you don't have to do everything at once! You could use the action plan template to help you with this.

Action plan template

You could use an action plan like this to plan progress against the things you identified through your assessment and SWOT analysis.

Area (people, comms, collections, resources, places, policies)	Key task	Who will do it?	Short, medium or long term?	Other resources needed?	Progress to date

Don't forget to review progress against your action plan e.g., as a standing item at your regular team meeting.

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